



Wellness Weekly

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 8

VITAMIN D DEFICIENCY



Technically not a "vitamin," vitamin D is in a class by itself. Its metabolic product, *calcitriol*, is actually a *secosteroid hormone* that targets over 2000 genes in the human body. Current *research* has implicated *vitamin D deficiency* as a major factor in the pathology of at least 17 varieties of cancer as well as heart disease, stroke, hypertension, autoimmune diseases, diabetes, depression, chronic pain, osteoarthritis, osteoporosis, muscle weakness, muscle wasting, birth defects, periodontal disease, and more.

Sunshine and Your Health

While exposure to sun may be the best way to boost vitamin D levels, this doesn't necessarily give sun lovers licence to tan. While being mindful of the threat of skin cancer, people should calculate how much time they spend in the sun depending on location, cloud cover, skin type, age and the amount of pollution in the area. Generally, doctors recommend that 10 to 15 minutes outdoors without sunscreen at least twice a week is adequate.

The Canadian Cancer Society warns that — for some people — increasing exposure to the sun by even a few minutes a day could increase the risk of skin cancer. The society recommends that people consider a balance of vitamin D supplements and small amounts of sun exposure to maintain proper levels of the vitamin while keeping risks of skin cancer to a minimum.

For further information about Vitamin D, visit [Health Canada](#).

VITAMIN D FOODS

To increase the amount of Vitamin D you consume by choosing healthy foods, try some of the following suggestions:

- Fish such as salmon, tuna, sardines, shrimp and mackerel are very good sources of Vitamin D
- Small amounts of vitamin D are found in beef liver and egg yolks
- Most milk is fortified with vitamin D, as are many ready-to-eat cereals
- Cheese naturally contains small amounts of vitamin D
- Mushrooms are a natural source of vitamin D. Every four shitake mushrooms provides 249 IU of vitamin D.
- Take a daily dose of fish oil supplement which is a good source of vitamin D.



The Wellness Weekly is written by [Deb Garland](#), Healthy Workplace Program Coordinator

Miss a week or wish to print a PDF of this week's news? Go to our website to [download](#) a copy.

Note: The contents of The Wellness Weekly are intended for general informational purposes and are not a substitute for proper medical advice. Please consult your family physician or health care professional before beginning any exercise regime—especially if you are: pregnant, nursing or have chronic health concerns. Discontinue any exercise that causes you pain and seek immediate medical treatment.