

5 Reasons Vitamin D is a Must-Have for Seniors

Vitamin D deficiency can have serious health effects on seniors and caregivers. Getting enough vitamin D through sunlight, diet or supplements can help prevent falls and fractures, autoimmune disorders, high blood pressure and some cancers



What is Vitamin D?

Essential for strong bones, vitamin D is produced by the body in response to sunlight. It helps the body absorb calcium, which is critical to bone strength and health.

As the Vitamin D Council explains, without vitamin D, our bodies may lose bone tissue, leading to bone pain, muscle weakness and possible skeletal deformity. We also need vitamin D to:

- Help our muscles move
- Regulate cell growth
- Carry messages through the nervous system
- Fight infection

Lack of vitamin D can happen year-round, not just in winter. Regular sun exposure on bare skin generally gives people all the vitamin D they need. But, in the winter months, time spent indoors prevents vitamin D from penetrating the skin.

Effects of Vitamin D Deficiency on Seniors

Vitamin D deficiency is common among seniors for several reasons. As the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition describes, older people are prone to certain risk factors, such as:

- Decreased dietary intake of vitamin D
- Less exposure to sunlight
- Reduced skin thickness
- Impaired intestinal absorption

A six-year study from the Netherlands found that seniors aged 65-88 with vitamin D deficiency are nearly twice as likely to have a physical limitation compared to seniors with the highest vitamin D levels.

The study, published in the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism, also indicated that 70% of seniors in this age group already have at least one physical limitation, and are likely to develop additional physical limitations over time.

5 Reasons Seniors Need Vitamin D

According to WebMD, more and more research points to vitamin D as integral in preventing a number of serious health problems. In fact, seniors who get the recommended amount of vitamin D each day are more likely to:

1. Prevent falls and fractures.
2. Lower risks for osteoporosis and other bone disorders.
3. Maintain their physical mobility and independence.
4. Decrease risks for cardiovascular problems, diabetes and some cancers.
5. Lower chances of early nursing home admission.

Tips for Getting Vitamin D

Sun exposure, supplements and certain fortified foods are the main sources of vitamin D. Because of the link between sun exposure and skin cancer, the National Institutes of Health

(NIH) recommends that adults rely on food and supplements to get the right amount of vitamin D each day.

Adults aged 19-70 should get 600 IU of vitamin D daily. People aged 71 and over should get 800 IU. A blood test can tell whether you are getting the right amount of vitamin D. Bear in mind that too much vitamin D can have serious health effects.

Source: www.aplaceformom.com

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