

AOL News

Low Vitamin D Levels Tied to Declines in Learning, Memory

By [Alyssa Sparacino](#)

Jul 12th 2010 4:00PM

Categories: [News](#)



William King, Getty Images

Catch some rays! News research suggests older adults who have low vitamin D levels could be more prone to thinking, learning and [memory](#) problems.

The study, which is published in the recent issue of [Archives of Internal Medicine](#), evaluated the results of interviews, medical exams and blood samples of 858 participants ages 65 and older and followed up three and then six years later.

Each time researchers repeated tests that assessed overall [cognitive](#) skill, attention and the ability to plan, organize and prioritize.

Results showed that those with a high [vitamin D](#) deficiency had a 60 percent increased risk for general cognitive decline over six years and a 31 percent increased risk for developing problems with the ability to plan. No significant results were found when measuring the participants' attention.

"If future prospective studies and randomized controlled trials confirm that [vitamin D](#) deficiency is causally related to cognitive decline, then this would open up important new possibilities for treatment and prevention," the study authors wrote.

[Vitamin D](#) has been shown to have a role in preventing erosion of brain tissue, maintaining balanced [calcium](#) levels and decreasing the risk of [Alzheimer's disease](#), but the researchers reported that anywhere from 40 to 100 percent of older adults in the U.S. are deficient.

An insufficient amount of vitamin D can lead to fractures, chronic illness and even death. Vitamin D is called the sunshine vitamin because the most potent form of it can be found outdoors. However, vitamin d can also be found in egg yolks, cheese and fatty fishes such as tuna and salmon.

More on Vitamin D:

[Vitamin D - Protecting Your Bones: Osteoporosis](#)

[Rickets Vitamin D Deficiency](#)

Archives of Internal Medicine – July 12, 2010 Issue – Note Articles on Lack of Vitamin D Health Effects <http://archinte.ama-assn.org/>

AOL Health News April 3, 2009

Why is it Important to Get Enough Vitamin D?

Your body needs vitamin D to absorb [calcium](#). Calcium keeps your bones and muscles, including your heart, healthy and strong.

People who do not get enough vitamin D throughout life have an increased chance of having thin and brittle bones ([osteoporosis](#)) in their later years. Thin and brittle bones break easily and can lead to serious injuries. This is why it is important for you to get enough vitamin D as a child and as an adult. It helps keep your bones strong as you get older and protects against possible breaks.

Your body also uses vitamin D to help your muscles absorb calcium and work well. If your muscles don't get enough calcium, then they can cramp, hurt, or feel weak. You may have long-term (chronic) muscle aches and pains. Getting enough vitamin D helps prevent these problems.

Children who don't get enough vitamin D may not grow as much as others their age. They also have a chance of getting a rare disease called [rickets](#), which causes weak bones.

Research suggests that low levels of vitamin D also may be linked to a number of other problems such as [high blood pressure](#), cancer, and [heart disease](#).

What is the recommended daily amount of vitamin D?

Recommendations vary, but experts recently have suggested that people need to get more vitamin D than listed in the [dietary reference intakes \(DRIs\)](#) guideline. The amount of vitamin D you need changes as you get older.

- Infants starting by age 2 months, children, and teens need 200 to 400 IU a day.¹²
- Adults up to age 50 need 400 to 800 IU a day.³²
- Adults age 50 or older need 800 to 1,000 IU a day.³²

How can you get enough vitamin D?

You can get enough vitamin D three ways—pills or drops, diet, and sunshine.

Pills or drops. There are different ways you can get vitamin D in pills:

- You can take a vitamin D pill that you can buy without a prescription.
- You can also get vitamin D by taking a multivitamin pill. Most multivitamins contain about 400 IU of vitamin D. But don't just take two multivitamins to get 800 IU. Taking more than one pill means that you will also get more of the other vitamins and minerals in the pill, and that can be harmful.

- Many calcium pills also contain vitamin D, but not enough to meet the recommended daily amount.

You can also take vitamin D drops that you can buy without a prescription. This may be a good choice for infants and for people who don't like to take pills.

Diet. Another way to get vitamin D is from the foods you eat. But most people don't get enough vitamin D through diet alone. That's because there aren't many foods rich in vitamin D. And you would have to eat a lot of them to get 800 to 1,000 IU a day.

Vitamin D is in foods such as:

- **Eggs.** An egg contains about 20 IU of vitamin D. Vitamin D is found in the yolk.
- **Liver.** A serving of beef liver has about 15 IU of vitamin D.
- **Oily fish** like tuna, mackerel, and salmon. A can of tuna packed in oil has about 200 IU of vitamin D. A serving of cooked mackerel contains about 345 IU of vitamin D, and a serving of cooked salmon contains about 360 IU.
- **Foods with added (fortified) vitamin D**, including milk and other dairy products, orange juice, and breakfast cereals. The amount of vitamin D in fortified foods varies. But as a guide, 1 cup of nonfat, reduced fat, or whole milk may contain about 98 IU of vitamin D. A cup of fortified breakfast cereal may contain about 40 IU.

Sunshine. Because your body uses sunshine to make vitamin D, spending time in the sun without sunscreen can help give you the vitamin D you need. People with lighter skin need to let the sun shine on their arms and legs for 10 to 15 minutes a day for a few days a week. People with dark skin would need to spend more time in the sun.

But experts disagree about whether people should spend even 10 to 15 minutes a day in the sun without sunscreen, because sunscreen helps prevent skin cancer. For that reason, you may want to get vitamin D from eating a healthy diet that includes foods fortified with vitamin D and by taking vitamin D pills.

Talk with your doctor about how much and what sources of vitamin D are right for you and your child.

Who may not get enough vitamin D?

Most people don't get enough vitamin D.

Your body uses sunshine to make vitamin D. But in the winter, people often spend more time indoors and don't get enough sun. And using sunscreen, which helps prevent skin cancer, reduces the amount of sun your body gets.

Other things that reduce how much vitamin D your body makes include:

- Dark skin, such as many African Americans have.
- Age, especially if you are older than 65.

- Digestive problems, such as [Crohn's](#) or [celiac](#) disease.
- Liver and kidney disease.

Are there any risks from taking vitamin D?

Too much of any vitamin can make a child sick. Be sure to follow your doctor's instructions about using vitamin drops so that you don't give your child too much.

For children and adults, too much vitamin D can cause:

- Nausea and vomiting.
- Constipation.
- Confusion.
- Heart rhythm problems.
- Weakness.

Vitamin D may interact with other medicines. A drug interaction happens when a medicine you take changes how another medicine works. One medicine may make another one less effective, or the combination of the medicines may cause a side effect you don't expect. Some drug interactions are dangerous.

Before you start taking vitamin D, tell your doctor about all of the medicines you take, including [over-the-counter drugs](#), herbs, and pills. Also tell your doctor about all of your current medical problems.

[Previous Chapter](#) | [Next Chapter](#)

End

<http://www.aolhealth.com/2010/06/02/overuse-of-calcium-supplements-cause-for-concern/>

News

Overuse of Calcium Supplements Linked to Dangerous Syndrome

By [Alyssa Sparacino](#)

June 2, 2010 12:16PM

Categories: [News](#)



jupiterimages

There is such a thing as too much of a good thing.

Widespread use of over-the-counter calcium and [vitamin D](#) supplements to strengthen bones has raised concerns that some people are doing more harm to themselves than good.

Drs. Stanley Goldfarb and Ami Patel, from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, write that doctors are seeing an increase in negative health effects linked to taking too much supplemental calcium. In many cases, people who overdo it on the calcium are coming down with a condition called milk-alkali or calcium-alkali syndrome that can result in a "dangerously high" level of calcium in the blood, leading to high [blood pressure](#) and [kidney failure](#).

The authors say the uptake of [calcium supplements](#) is most likely due to people looking to prevent and treat their [osteoporosis](#), but taking too many supplements often lands people in the hospital.

Goldfarb advises that people limit their calcium intake to 1.2 and 1.5 grams per day to stay healthy.

"Calcium supplements taken in the recommended amounts are not only safe but are quite beneficial," he said. "Taken to excess is the problem. Yearly determinations of blood calcium levels for those patients taking [calcium supplements](#) or vitamin D is a wise approach."

In their commentary, they also note that the syndrome's name should not confuse people to think it is caused from milk because, in most cases, it's caused by [calcium supplements](#).

People who present the highest risk for developing the syndrome are postmenopausal women, pregnant women, transplant recipients, patients with bulimia and those who are on [dialysis](#).

The authors' commentary will be published in the [Journal of the American Society of Nephrology](#).

More On Calcium:

[Calcium in Arteries May Predict Heart Attack](#)

[Vitamins, Calcium Supplements May Reduce Breast Cancer Risk](#)

<http://www.aolhealth.com/conditions/rickets-vitamin-d-deficiency>

Rickets – April 25, 2008

AOL News

Content provided by National Organization for Rare Disorders - Rickets

Important

It is possible that the main title of the report Rickets, Vitamin D Deficiency is not the name you expected. Please check the [synonyms](#) listing to find the alternate name(s) and [disorder subdivision\(s\)](#) covered by this report.

Synonyms

- Nutritional Rickets
- Rickets
- Vitamin-D Deficiency Rickets

Disorder Subdivisions

- None

General Discussion

Vitamin-D deficiency rickets, a disorder that becomes apparent during infancy or childhood, is the result of insufficient amounts of vitamin D in the body. The vitamin deficiency may be caused by poor nutrition, a lack of exposure to the sun, or malabsorption syndromes in which the intestines do not adequately absorb nutrients from foods. Vitamin D is needed for the metabolism of calcium and phosphorus in the body, which, in turn affects how calcium is deposited in the bones; thus it is considered essential for proper bone development and growth. Major symptoms of vitamin D deficiency rickets include bone disease, restlessness, and slow growth. This disorder is rare in the United States but is not uncommon in certain areas of the world.

Resources

NIH/National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse

2 Information Way

Bethesda, MD 20892-3570

Tel: (301)654-3810

Fax: (301)907-8906

Tel: (800)891-5389

Email: nddic@info.niddk.nih.gov

Internet: <http://www.niddk.nih.gov>

XLH Network Inc.

4562 Stoneledge Lane

Manlius, NY 13104

Tel: (315)682-2659

Email: info@xlhnetwork.org

Internet: <http://www.xlhnetwork.org>

MUMS National Parent-to-Parent Network

150 Custer Court

Green Bay, WI 54301-1243

USA

Tel: (920)336-5333

Fax: (920)339-0995

Tel: (877)336-5333

Email: mums@netnet.net

Internet: <http://www.netnet.net/mums/>

XLH Network (UK)

Elpha Green Cottage

Sparty Lea, Allendale

Northumberland, NE47 9UT

UK

Tel: 44 (0) 1434 685047

Fax: 44 (0) 1434 685179

Email: Larry@XLHNetwork.org

Internet: <http://www.xlhnetwork.org>

Genetic and Rare Diseases (GARD) Information Center

PO Box 8126

Gaithersburg, MD 20898-8126

Tel: (301)251-4925

Fax: (301)251-4911

Tel: (888)205-2311

TDD: (888)205-3223

Email: ordr@od.nih.gov

Internet: <http://rarediseases.info.nih.gov/Default.aspx>

For a Complete Report

This is an abstract of a report from the National Organization for Rare Disorders, Inc. ® (NORD). A copy of the complete report can be obtained for a small fee by visiting the NORD website. The complete report contains additional information including symptoms, causes, affected population, related disorders, standard and investigational treatments (if available), and references from medical literature. For a full-text version of this topic, see <http://www.rarediseases.org/search/rdblist.html>

The information provided in this report is not intended for diagnostic purposes. It is provided for informational purposes only. NORD recommends that affected individuals seek the advice or counsel of their own personal physicians.

It is possible that the title of this topic is not the name you selected. Please check the Synonyms listing to find the alternate name(s) and Disorder Subdivision(s) covered by this report

This disease entry is based upon medical information available through the date at the end of the topic. Since NORD's resources are limited, it is not possible to keep every entry in the Rare Disease Database completely current and accurate. Please check with the agencies listed in the Resources section for the most current information about this disorder.

For additional information and assistance about rare disorders, please contact the National Organization for Rare Disorders at P.O. Box 1968, Danbury, CT 06813-1968; phone (203) 744-0100; web site www.rarediseases.org or email orphan@rarediseases.org

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4/25/2008

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