

VITAMIN D—THE CURE FOR MANY DISEASES?

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I have been planning for many months to write a commentary on Vitamin D. Recently I had the good fortune to spend a couple of hours with Dr. Joe Prendergast, an endocrinologist /diabetologist.

He has managed over 1500 diabetic patients and, in the last decade, not one of his patients has had a stroke or heart attack. Only one has even been hospitalized! His secret—50,000 units of Vitamin D3 daily. Dr. Joe further reports:

- Reversal of advanced coronary disease
- Reversal of advanced lung disease, avoiding a lung transplant!
- Cure of multiple sclerosis
- Cure of amotrophic lateral sclerosis
- Regression of rheumatoid arthritis
- Improvement in allergies
- Control of many cancers including prostate, breast, colon, brain tumors, leukemia, myeloma, etc
- Reversal of osteoporosis
- Prevention of influenza
- Cure of depression and many other mental disorders
- Hashimoto's hyperthyroidism

He slyly then mentions that men report that the penis grows an average of 10% in length and girth (Volunteers??) and that women report growth of the labia.

Upon my return home, I searched the literature and found thousands of articles supporting in general every possibility Dr. Prendergast mentioned, except penis and labia growth. Interestingly, I did not find a single article integrating all this remarkable potential benefit in virtually every disease. Indeed, I know of no supplement or treatment that is so successful in such a broad variety of diseases. One of D's greatest effects appears to be immune modulation. Indeed, even tuberculosis is strongly correlated with deficiency of vitamin D!

Vitamin D enhances calcium absorption, which enhances milk production in pregnant women. Suckling of the breast induces prolactin and oxytocin production (even in non-pregnant women) the nurturing and trust hormones. Everything is related to everything!

The recommended daily intake of vitamin D is only 400 units. When I was in medical school dosages above 1000 units were thought to be toxic—perhaps because most of the D then came from cod liver oil and were associated with significant amounts of vitamin A. Vitamin A is toxic at long term dosages above 10,000 units, although beta carotene is safe at dosages up to hundreds of thousands of units. There are several articles which emphasize the safety of Vitamin D up to 10,000 units. And a single article suggests that

50,000 units will not induce toxicity. Among the most interesting articles are many that emphasize the remarkable decrease in Type 1 diabetes in children given 2000 units of D throughout early childhood—up to 80% decreased incidence! Dr. Prendergast recommends increasing to 50,000 units at puberty. There are also suggestions that gluten sensitivity may be increased because of inadequate D. Since one-third of Americans have gluten sensitivity, D deficiency may be a contributor!

One article has stated that 15 minutes of exposure to sunlight on face and hands leads to production of 400 units of D. Total body exposure might then be approximately 8000 units per hour. One could argue that our forebears living, in the tropics, might have produced well over 50,000 units of D daily!!

Dr. Prendergast warns that patients taking 50,000 units of vitamin D3 SHOULD NOT TAKE ANY CALCIUM SUPPLEMENTS! It is fine to have some milk products and the small dose of calcium in most multivitamins (400 mg) will not be a problem. Since most adults seem to have deposits of calcium outside bones, in arteries, around joints, etc, perhaps the vitamin D assists in retrieving calcium from these undesirable deposits! The OTHER EXCEPTION TO THE 50,000 UNITS WOULD BE INDIVIDUALS WITH KIDNEY FAILURE—THOSE ON DIALYSIS. Although there is great evidence that D is needed and that D deficiency is related to kidney failure, the dose in these individuals should be monitored by blood levels!

In summary, the evidence for safety and remarkable efficacy of Vitamin D3 suggests that virtually ALL adults should probably take 50,000 units of D3 daily. This is certainly true for those with virtually any illness. If you are concerned about that dosage, then take six 50,000 unit capsules each month. Children, pre-puberty should take 2000 units.