

Sunshine - Natural Source for Vitamin D

Sun exposure to the skin is the human race's natural, most effective and also most neglected source of vitamin D. Vitamin D sufficiency, along with diet and exercise, has emerged as one of the most important preventive factors in human health. Hundreds of studies now link vitamin D deficiency with significantly higher rates of many forms of cancer, as well as heart disease, osteoporosis, multiple sclerosis and many other conditions and diseases.

We advocate natural vitamin D production through regular sun exposure without burning

- ❖ Humans make 90 percent of our vitamin D naturally from sunlight exposure to our skin, specifically from ultraviolet B exposure, which naturally initiates the conversion of cholesterol in the skin to vitamin D3.
- ❖ Few foods naturally contain or are fortified with supplemental vitamin D. For example, an 8-ounce glass of whole milk is fortified with 100 IU (international units) of vitamin D, just 10 percent of what the most conservative vitamin D researchers now say we need daily. In contrast, sun exposure to the skin makes thousands of units of vitamin D naturally in a relatively short period of time.
- ❖ While vitamin D supplements are an alternative means of producing vitamin D when regular sun exposure is not possible, oral supplementation of vitamin D is not nature's intended means of producing this vitamin.
- ❖ While overexposure to sunlight carries risks, the cosmetic skin care industry has misled the public into believing that any UV exposure is harmful. No research has shown that regular exposure to UV light without burning poses a significant risk of skin damage.
- ❖ The UV rays from sunlight are essential for good physical and mental health. Sunlight is your body's primary and most natural source of vitamin D, which is absolutely necessary for the absorption of calcium for strong bone reformation to occur. Lack of sunlight or the use of improper sunscreens (high SPF's commonly containing chemical UV filters that block too much sunlight) may lead to vitamin D deficiency. Required is therefore moderate sunbathing and using a natural sunscreen product with a moderate SPF.
- ❖ Humans spend less time in the sun today than at any point in human history – which is why more than 1 billion people worldwide are vitamin D deficient.

Vitamin D from the Sun

Sunlight is the best and most effective natural source of vitamin D. Unlike dietary or supplementary vitamin D, the body handles the vitamin D from sunshine differently: From sunshine, the body takes only required amount of vitamin D, and de-metabolizes any extra. While some excess vitamin D is stored in the body (fatty tissues) during the summer months and can be later used in sun-deficient periods, it is important that you get a good dietary source of vitamin D to help you out during the winter months. Vitamin D experts and many health groups now advocate 2,000 IU of vitamin D daily (New 2012 EU guidance on vitamin D sets the tolerable intake level to 4,000 IU/ day). That is five to ten times the old recommendations.

Sunlight Exposure* (without sunscreen) <i>to the arms and legs between 10 AM and 3 PM. Rule of thumb for a fair-skinned person exposed to 0.5 MED (minimal erythemal dose)</i>	Equivalent to ingesting ~ 3,000 IU
<i>In a bathing suit</i>	Equivalent to ingesting Up to 10,000 IU

*) Source: Holick, MF. The Vitamin D Solution, 2010 1 MED = Minimum amount of UVB radiation that produces redness after sun exposure

The amount of vitamin D produced depends mainly on the region and time of the year: The farther away from the equator (higher latitude) you live, the less intense (UVB) the sun gets and the less vitamin D you will receive. A skin type 3 (Caucasian skin) in Miami in mid-summer may need 5 - 10 minutes to get the 1,000 IU of vitamin D whereas the same person in New York would need 15 - 20 minutes of sun exposure. At least three times a week of sunlight exposure are recommended to get the required amount of Vitamin D. Darker-skinned individuals need more exposure than fair-skinned people to make the same amount of vitamin D. In northern climates sunlight is too weak in parts of the year to make any vitamin D – a period referred to as 'Vitamin D Winter'.

To determine the amount of sun exposure at your location to meet the vitamin D requirement, please visit:
www.impex-intl.com/impex2009_015.htm

It helps to think of your body's total surface area in terms of percentages *):

- Face: 9 %
- Arms: 18 %
- Abdomen and chest: 18 %
- Back: 18 %
- Legs: 36 %
- Other: 1 %

If you are concerned about wrinkles, there is plenty of opportunity to get your vitamin D by exposing large parts of your surface area to the sun minus your face. Exposing your arms and legs will often do the trick in just a few minutes.

Before considering supplementation with vitamin D (preferably Vitamin D3), it is recommended to have your vitamin D level tested. Have your medical doctor perform the Vitamin D test.

Vitamin D Blood Levels

25-Hydroxy Vitamin D Test

Deficient	Insufficient	Optimal	Treat Cancer	Excess
< 30 ng/ml	31 – 49 ng/ml	50 – 70 ng/ml	71 - 99 ng/ml	> 100 ng/ml
< 75 nmol/l	76 – 124 nmol/l	125 – 175 nmol/l	176 – 249 nmol/l	> 250 nmol/l