

# VITAMIN D

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Recently it has become clear that there is a **Vitamin D deficiency epidemic** in the US. The leading natural source of vitamin D is sunlight exposure, and most of us avoid spending time in the sun ~ and wear sunscreen when we do.

Studies have related vitamin D deficiency with not only osteopenia / osteoporosis but also heart disease, diabetes, cancer, infections, and neurodegenerative disease.

**Vitamin D deficiency is linked to *higher mortality rates*, and greater risks of:**

***Breast, colon, overall cancers*** (significant decreased risk with adequate Vit. D)

***Osteoporosis, fractures, falls, postural instability, frailty syndrome***

***Heart disease and hypertension***

***Diabetes*** (risk reduced by 24% with adequate supplementation of Vit. D)

***Dementia, poor cognitive performance, Parkinson's disease, Multiple Sclerosis***

***Muscle weakness, loss of muscle mass*** (pelvic floor disorders – incontinence)

***Decreased immunity, increased inflammation, increased pain with arthritis***

***Depression***

***Macular degeneration***

**Measurement of serum Vit. D 25(OH) levels allows determination of vitamin D status, with optimal levels ranging from 40 to 76 ng/mL. To achieve adequate levels, those with low serum 25(OH)D (less than 20 ng/ml) may need starting doses of 10,000 IU / day tapering to 2,000 to 4,000 IU/day after the 1<sup>st</sup> month. 15 minutes of midday sunlight exposure without sunscreen 3 to 4 times weekly is beneficial.**

**In postmenopausal women, deficiency is exacerbated by the loss of estrogen...**

**Studies suggest that higher concentrations of Vit. D and increased sun exposure earlier in life reduces the risk of developing breast cancer by as much as 50% to 75%.**

References: North American Menopause Society Journal, 2011

Int J Cancer 2010

Medscape Education Clinical Briefs 2012. Guideline

Issued on Vitamin D and Postmenopause

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