

Vitamin D, Winter, and the Power of Moonlight

Vitamin D is a nutrient that's commonly deficient in Canadians. It's important for all body systems, including the immune system and nervous system.

We're not likely to absorb enough vitamin D when we're outside in the winter because we're all bundled up. Many of my patients who have had their Vitamin D tested have been deficient. In my opinion, it's a good idea to get vitamin D tested every fall. Vitamin D is a fat soluble vitamin, meaning you can do yourself harm by taking more than your body can handle. Be smart about your Vitamin D dosing, make sure you know exactly how much your body needs.

However, It's Not All About Vitamin D

Vitamin D has been nicknamed the "sunshine vitamin". However Vitamin D does not equal sunshine and sunshine does not equal Vitamin D. An example of this is that sunlight exposure has been shown to boost serotonin levels. Serotonin is a neurotransmitter that helps us feel calm and happy. We can absorb serotonin through a window, but we can't absorb Vitamin D through a window.

Sunshine does not equal outdoors either. Though it's more difficult to be outdoors in the winter, it's also more refreshing. Short spurts in the outdoors have more of an impact in the winter. Some of us will get sick if we're out for too long, especially if it's cold and damp out. However in my opinion, 10 minute intervals outdoors can actually strengthen most people's immunity if we're dressed for the weather, moving around, and keeping our feet dry.

Many of us miss the sun a lot during the winter because by the time we can get outdoors it's dark. However, moonlight has its own mysterious powers. Though I can't support this statement with research papers, I think if you pay enough attention, you'll discover several health benefits of moonlight.

Getting outside will be uncomfortable at first, because it's a little bit like doing a workout. The first few minutes are unpleasant, but we never regret doing it.

I challenge you to go out and discover the power of winter cold and the power of moonlight. Get some warm clothes that you love wearing and a really great pair of boots.

-Dr. Angela, ND