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Nutrition news

NUTRITION EDUCATION IN EASY TO DIGEST BYTES!

Vitamin D: New Light on the Sunshine Vitamin



In today's world, scientific breakthroughs discover new and exciting health-benefiting nutrients all the time.

Phytochemicals in plants continue to be found and new health benefits are revealed. It is hard to imagine that the old, stand-by vitamins could hold any new and exciting secrets.

But such is the case for Vitamin D! Vitamin D was discovered in 1922 by Edward Mellanby while he was researching the condition known as rickets. It has been widely known for its importance in helping to keep our bones strong by increasing absorption of the minerals calcium and phosphorus.

Vitamin D, a fat-soluble vitamin, can be found in egg yolks, fatty fish, beef, liver and in fortified foods such milk, soy milk and cereals. In addition, Vitamin D has the unique distinction of being the only vitamin that our bodies can produce with the help of sunlight.

A lack of Vitamin D is known to cause problems like rickets and osteomalacia, which affects the bones. In both of these diseases the bones can become soft, flexible and deformed. Rickets in children can lead to a bow-legged appearance and/or an outward-bowed chest.

New studies are showing that Vitamin D plays an important role in a variety of other health related matters as well.

Researchers at the University of Copenhagen have recently discovered that

Vitamin D plays a critical role in helping our immune system work effectively by activating our T-cells. T-cells attack foreign invaders in our body, like viruses and bacteria, but must first be prompted to do so by Vitamin D. Without Vitamin D the cells remain dormant and unaware of the invaders.

Vitamin D seems to have very potent anti-cancer properties as well. In a study published last year in the *Journal of Biological Chemistry* Sylvia Chistakos, Ph.D., of the UMDNJ-New Jersey Medical School noted that Vitamin D in its active form could induce a tumor suppressing protein that could inhibit the growth of malignant breast cancer cells. Past studies had shown that higher levels of Vitamin D were also associated with improved outcomes for patients with breast cancer. In addition, researchers at the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas-Universidad Autónoma in Madrid, Spain noted that Vitamin D also inhibited the growth of colon cancer cells.

Vitamin D's protective effects against low level radiation were also noted in 2008 by researcher and radiological expert Daniel Hayes, Ph.D., of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Dr. Hayes noted that Vitamin D may protect us from background radiation and could be used as a safe protective agent before or after a low-level nuclear incident.

Vitamin D also protects against inflammation. Low levels of Vitamin D have been shown to increase inflammation. In a study done at the University of Missouri it was noted that otherwise healthy women with low levels of Vitamin D had increased amounts of the inflammation marker TNF- α . Inflammation can lead to diseases such as heart disease, rheumatoid arthritis and multiple sclerosis. Low levels of Vitamin D are also noted in individuals with Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) and Chronic Liver Disease. In addition, low levels of the vitamin were also linked in higher rates of asthma in children in the metro Washington D.C. area.

It is estimated that 75% of Americans do not get the recommended intake of Vitamin D every day. Various foods offer Vitamin D such as butter, egg yolk and liver but best dietary sources are found in fish liver oils and fortified foods. In addition, sunshine helps us to produce the vitamin but many people don't get the exposure they need. Are you getting enough Vitamin D?

Reduce! Reuse! Recycle!

Healthy Habits:

One Day at a Time!

For years now, the news has reported that many Americans are overweight or obese. We eat lots of fast food and we don't exercise enough. If we know what the problem is, why is it so hard to fix? A recent study from the Scripps Research Institute showed that overeating and drug addiction can be explained in the same way.

Dopamine is a chemical in our brain that makes us feel happy and tingly inside. When people take drugs they get a surge of dopamine. When the effect wears off, they feel anxious and crave the drug (withdrawal).



The study's major finding was that high-calorie, high-fat foods also give us that surge of dopamine! Healthier foods give us less dopamine. That's why changing eating habits too much or too soon is so difficult. We all want to be healthier but we also want to feel happy. So, if you're looking to make changes to your diet, make small changes over time to help you reach your goals.

-from Science Daily
<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/03/100328170243.htm>

Calcium: Are you getting enough?



Calcium is a mineral that our bodies need to help make our bones and teeth strong. But did you know that calcium is also needed to make our muscles move and our heart pump? Be sure to include calcium-rich foods as part of your diet everyday! Here are some calcium-rich foods:

- Dairy and dairy products like milk, yogurt and cheese. Be sure to eat mostly low fat or non-fat varieties for better health!
- Calcium-fortified foods like soy or rice milk, orange juice, breads and cereals.
- Salmon with bones, spinach, almonds, beans, & broccoli.

Summer's Sun-Ripened Goodness

With so many delicious summer fruits and vegetables, this is the perfect time to join the seasonal eating trend. By eating the fruits and vegetables that are in season, grown locally we get the most nutrition those foods have to offer. They taste better, too!

Farmer's markets are a great place to buy local, seasonal produce. At your next cookout, try grilling veggies like zucchini and corn. For dessert, make a fresh fruit salad. Here is a list of summer fruits and vegetables we can look forward to:

Summer vegetables		Summer fruits	
Green beans	Onions	Blueberries	Red grapes
Tomatoes	Potatoes	Strawberries	Raspberries
Radishes	Eggplant	Cherries	Valencia Oranges
Zucchini	Garlic	Melons	Apples
Peppers	Okra	Nectarines	Watermelon
Corn	Squash	Peaches	Papaya
Cucumbers	Black-eyed Peas	Pears	Kiwi
Spinach	Lettuce	Plums	Mango
Sweet Potatoes	Rhubarb	Pineapple	Figs



Information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
 Learn more about Project Angel Food at www.angelfood.org!

Si desea recibir esta información en Español, por favor llame al 323.845.1800