

AND NOW A WORD FROM THE DOCTOR...

The Brain Benefits of Vitamin D

By David Perlmutter, MD, FACN



While the benefits of vitamin D for building and maintaining strong bones is well-known, new research is expanding the knowledge base for this important hormone. We are now beginning to grasp the importance of vitamin D as it relates to the risk of developing a variety of medical problems, including heart disease, various forms of cancer, diabetes, and depression.

In a recent study in the journal *Archives of Internal Medicine*, researchers evaluated the brain performance of 858 adults aged 65 years or older and found that those individuals with the lowest levels of vitamin D were 60% more likely to become mentally impaired during the six-year study. Most of the difficulties these subjects experienced included problems with organizational skills, planning, and prioritizing.

These are sobering findings, especially considering that more than 40% of American adults may be vitamin D-deficient. But there is an upside, according to the report's author, David J. Llewellyn, PhD., who stated: "This raises the possibility that vitamin D supplements may have therapeutic potential for the prevention of dementia, and clinical trials are now urgently needed."

Vitamin D is made in our bodies when we are exposed to sunlight. But sun avoidance is recommended to reduce the risk of skin cancer. Fortunately, vitamin D is available as a nutritional supplement in pharmacies and health food stores. Your doctor can check your vitamin D level in a simple blood test and help you determine how much to take.

Remember the sunshine vitamin – good for your bones, good for your brain!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David".