

Nutrition News And Notes

Shedding New Light On The Importance Of The “Sunshine Vitamin”

(NAPSA)—Even though people have the ability to make their own vitamin D when the ultraviolet rays of the sun hit their skin, many Americans fail to get enough vitamin D. In fact, vitamin D deficiency in this country is being called a silent epidemic. The prudent use of sunscreen, sun-blocking pollution and long, cold winters indoors are partially to blame.

While longer days bring more sunshine, you can't always count on the sun to supply all of the vitamin D you need. That's why it's even more important to look to your diet for your D, according to registered dietitian and Food Network host Ellie Krieger, who is sporting a white upper lip to extol the virtues of this vital vitamin and talk about milk as “liquid sunshine.”

“It's alarming to see so many people fail to get enough vitamin D, especially when milk is such an easy and convenient source of this essential nutrient,” Krieger said.

“Now more than ever we're learning about the health risks linked to vitamin D deficiency.”

Milk is one of the few food sources of vitamin D. In fact, it's the leading source of vitamin D in the American diet. The recommended three 8-ounce glasses of lowfat or fat free milk provide 75 percent of the daily value for vitamin D. Milk also provides eight other essential nutrients, including calcium, potassium and vitamin A, which many Americans also lack.

Krieger is the first registered dietitian to don the famous Milk Mustache—joining the ranks of more than 250 actors, athletes, models and musicians who have appeared in the popular “got milk?” campaign.



You may not be getting enough of the “sunshine vitamin” from the sun alone. In fact, vitamin D deficiency in this country is being called a silent epidemic.

“Super Nutrient”

Vitamin D was once known as simply a bone builder. It's true that vitamin D works with calcium to keep bones strong, but new and emerging research suggests vitamin D may be far more versatile, offering an array of health benefits. Some preliminary research suggests vitamin D may support a healthy immune system, heart health, normal blood pressure and healthy aging. And, ongoing research continues to explore the potential connection between vitamin D and certain diseases, including some cancers.

Despite the newfound fame for vitamin D, Americans of all ages appear to be coming up short. Some researchers estimate that up to 55 percent of adolescents may be deficient in vitamin D—putting them at risk for osteoporosis and debilitating bone diseases, according to one

recent analysis of children living in the northeastern United States. The researchers believe the trend of soft drinks replacing milk may be one important reason for this trend. The problem could be even worse as Americans get older. According to recent government data, only 4 percent of men and 1 percent of women over the age of 51 meet vitamin D recommendations from food. The researchers found that even infants and small children seem to be failing to get enough vitamin D. Experts suggest the chronic low intakes of vitamin D have been behind the resurgence of rickets—a severe vitamin D deficiency that results in bone deformities.

Shedding New Light on Vitamin D

Eighty-eight percent of Americans believe they get the vitamin D they need from the sun, according to a recent survey commissioned by the “got milk?” campaign and conducted online by Impulse Research. For most people, vitamin D is not even on their radar screen. Seventy-five percent are not sure how much vitamin D they need and there is significant confusion about where to find it—23 percent believe exercising regularly will increase their vitamin D and one in five Americans believe a good night's sleep will replenish their vitamin D.

GetYourD.com is a Web site to help correct the country's D deficit. Learn more about the scientific studies that document vitamin D's wide range of health benefits. Visitors will also find a quick quiz to see if they are “D-prived” and get some bright ideas on how to up their intake with tips and recipes from Krieger.