

HEALTH TIPS FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE 2016

VITAMIN D DEFICIENCY & ITS HEALTH IMPACT

If you shun the sun, suffer from milk allergies, or adhere to a strict vegan diet, you may be at risk for Vitamin D deficiency.

VITAMIN D:

Known as the sunshine vitamin, produced by the body in response to skin exposed to sunlight. There are two forms of Vitamin D, known as D2 and D3. Vitamin D2, also known as ergocalciferol, comes from fortified foods, plant foods, and supplements. Vitamin D3, also known as cholecalciferol, comes from fortified foods, animal foods (fish, eggs, and liver), and can be made internally when your skin is exposed to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun. Vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin. This means that it is stored in our fat cells, constantly used for calcium metabolism and bone remodeling.

Uses of Vitamin D:

Vitamin D is essential for strong bones, because it helps the body to use calcium from the diet.

Symptoms and Health Risks of Vitamin D deficiency:

- Bone pain and muscle weakness.
- Rickets, a bone-deforming disease.
- Short stature and deformities of the skeleton, especially of the lower legs. Research suggests that vitamin D could play a role in the prevention and treatment of a number of different conditions, including type 1 and type 2 diabetes, hypertension, glucose intolerance, and multiple sclerosis.

Causes of Vitamin D deficiency:

- Less Consumption : This is likely if you follow a strict vegan diet, because most of the natural sources are animal-based, including fish and fish oils, egg yolks, cheese, fortified milk, and beef liver.
- Less exposure to sunlight : Vitamin D is produced when the skin is exposed to sunlight.

- **Dark skin:** The pigment melanin reduces the skin's ability to make vitamin D in response to sunlight exposure.
- **Kidney Disease:** As people age, their kidneys are less able to convert vitamin D to its active form, thus increasing their risk of vitamin D deficiency.
- **Less Absorption:** Certain medical problems, including Crohn's Disease, cystic fibrosis, and celiac disease, can affect your intestine's ability to absorb vitamin D from the food you eat.
- **Obese:** Vitamin D is extracted from the blood by fat cells, altering its release into the circulation. People with a body mass index of 30 or greater often have low levels of vitamin D.

Prevention of Vitamin D Deficiency:

It is suggested that 10 – 15 minutes of sun exposure at least two times per week to the face, hands, arms or back without sunscreen is usually sufficient to meet the needs. If you have any related symptoms, kindly consult doctor to check your vitamin D level in the blood, if less you will be advised to take oral Vitamin D supplement.