

Millions of American Men at Undue Risk for a Heart Attack

a problem remedied by 3000 units of supplemental vitamin D per day

by **Bill Sardi**
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If a study of 18,225 American men (health professionals) age 40–75 years is reflective of the entire population of middle-aged males, three-quarters of adult males in the U.S. face a doubling of their risk for a heart attack due to low vitamin D levels. A vitamin D deficiency is far more predictive of a future heart attack than cholesterol, says a report due to be published in the Archives of Internal Medicine on Monday, June 9, 2008. Vitamin D deficiency is almost totally preventable with dietary supplementation.

High cholesterol combined with a vitamin D deficiency served to increase the risk of a heart attack by about 2.4 times, but a vitamin D deficiency alone accounted for 2.0 times of that risk, or 83% of the increased risk.

The study compared men with vitamin D levels at or below 15 nanograms of vitamin D per milliliter of blood (37.4 nanomoles per liter) to men with vitamin D levels above 30 nanograms per milliliter (74.8 nanomoles per liter). Men with a low (less than 15 nanograms/milliliter) level of vitamin D would need about 3000 international units (IU) of supplemental vitamin D3 per day to reach a 30 nanogram blood concentration, say study researchers. Most multivitamins provide a paltry 400 IU of vitamin D.

Men in the study group averaged 200–205 total cholesterol, which is considered a healthy range. Most of the decreased risk for a heart attack among men who had higher vitamin D levels was attributed to vitamin D's ability to prevent arterial calcification, not cholesterol

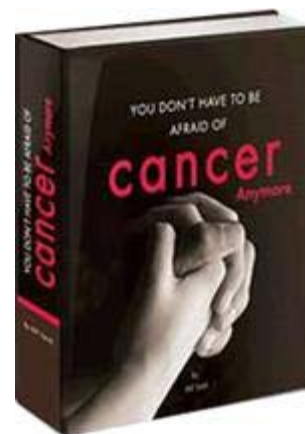
plaque.

Researchers at the Institute of Physical Medicine, University Hospital Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland, cite that vitamin D has widespread health benefits (reduced risk for falls, admission to nursing homes, fractures, cancer prevention, less high blood pressure and even fewer dental cavities), with the most advantageous serum levels at least 30 nanograms per milliliter (75 nanomoles/liter), with a higher optimal range for cancer prevention, 36–48 nanograms/milliliter (90–120 nanomole/liter). [Advances Experimental Medicine Biology 624: 55–71, 2008] This translates to more than the suggested 3000 IU in the Archives of Internal Medicine study.

This study means the Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) for vitamin D is woefully inadequate, particularly for a population that is being advised to avoid midday sun exposure because of risks for skin cancer. Most natural vitamin D is produced in the skin upon exposure to solar ultraviolet radiation. (It takes about 18 minutes of total-body midday summer sun exposure to produce 3000 IU of natural vitamin D₃.) Furthermore, many Americans falsely believe their diet, or fortified milk, provides sufficient amounts of vitamin D.

This study also indicts public health authorities for being remiss in re-establishing a higher RDA for vitamin D, an essential vitamin discovered by Professor Edward Mellanby in 1922.

The millions of lives lost due to a common vitamin D deficiency is a failure that is indefensible. Anytime in the past 8 decades this increased risk could have been identified. Instead, modern medicine chose to combat heart attacks with near useless statin drugs. According to Dr. John Abramson of Harvard Medical School, statin drugs have not been shown to reduce the risk for a mortal heart attack. [Lancet 2007 Jan 20; 369(9557):168–9] The



Therapeutics Letter says statin drugs like Lipitor prevent only 1 non-mortal heart attack for every 70 healthy adults taking a statin drug for prevention. [Therapeutics Letter 2003; 48:1–2]

According to the US Census Bureau, there are about 37 million men age 45–64, who fall within the age group in this study. Each year,

approximately 543,000 men suffer heart attacks.

*Source: Giovannucci E, Liu Y, Hollis BW, Rimm EB,
25-Hydroxyvitamin D and Risk of Myocardial Infarction in Men.
Archives Internal Medicine 168: 1174–80, June 9, 2008.*

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Bill Sardi [send him mail] is author of the new book: [You Don't Have To Be Afraid Of Cancer Anymore](#).

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