

XYNERGY PRESS INFORMATION

VITAMIN D – NOW YOU HAVE A GOOD EXCUSE TO HEAD FOR THE SUN

Researchers at the University of Oxford published a report in April suggesting that low levels of sunlight could affect how the body responds to infection. And that reduced exposure to the sun coupled with glandular fever heightens the risk of developing multiple sclerosis (MS).

MS is a perverse disease that attacks the myelin sheath, the protective layer around nerves. Messages from the brain to the rest of the body are disrupted, resulting in poor mobility, muscle weakness and blurred vision. Statistical studies have shown that, in the UK, the incidence of MS and poor vitamin D levels is higher in Scotland than Southern England for example. The disease is almost non-existent in parts of Africa.

The sunlight connection

Vitamin D is created in the body through exposure to sunlight. The Oxford researchers found that just by analysing sunlight, they could explain 61% of the variation in the number of MS cases across England. But when they combined the effect of sunlight and glandular fever, 72% of the variation in MS cases could be explained.

This is where health advice has almost come full circle. The warnings against tanning and too much sun have been a little muted of late when the Vitamin D link was realized. More and more research has pointed to a link between Vitamin D deficiency and a host of medical conditions including increased risks of heart attack, high blood pressure, diabetes risk, osteoporosis, depression as well as muscle weakness and bone deformities. In children, it can mean poor growth.

Best sources of Vitamin D

Firstly, very few foods contain Vitamin D. But the best sources are the flesh of fatty fish – salmon, tuna and mackerel, and fish liver oils. Small amounts of Vitamin D are found in beef liver, cheese and egg yolks. Some mushrooms provide Vitamin D and there are ranges of fortified foods – breakfast cereals, fruit juice, yoghurt and more that have had Vitamin D added.

Vitamin D is available in supplement form but there are not many and some have come in for criticism. Something we at Xynergy are working on... to identify a good source of this vital nutrient.

For now, exposure but not over-exposure to sunlight and the foods above are currently the surest way to ensure you get enough Vitamin D. But who needs an excuse to head for the sun?