

Milk Is America's top source of much-needed vitamin D

April 27 2010

America needs more vitamin D. It's one more reason to grab another glass of milk, according to new research presented at the Experimental Biology conference in Anaheim, California. Milk is the primary source of vitamin D in the American diet, supplying nearly half of all of the much-needed vitamin D.

Using the latest national data (NHANES 2003-2006) on what more than 16,000 Americans ages two and older eat, researchers investigated the contribution of each food group to the total [vitamin D](#) intake. No other food item came close to the vitamin D contribution of milk. In fact, for kids ages 2 to eighteen, milk provided nearly two-thirds of all vitamin D in the diet.

"There are few true replacements for the nutrient package you find in one glass of fat free or lowfat milk," said Dr. Keith Ayoob, a registered dietitian and pediatric nutrition expert. "Without milk in the diet, it's hard to meet a number of nutrient needs - most notably vitamin D."

Many Americans are not getting enough vitamin D, and this D-ficiency may put their health at risk. Well known for its role in keeping bones strong, vitamin D is now being hailed for so much more. Emerging science suggests vitamin D may also help protect against diabetes, [hypertension](#), [heart disease](#) and certain cancers. It also supports a healthy immune system.

Despite a potential upside of boosting vitamin D levels, Americans of all

ages still fall short of their vitamin D needs. In fact, current deficiency levels prompted the American Academy of Pediatrics to double the vitamin D recommendations for children and teens. The Academy estimates that up to half of adolescents have low vitamin D levels.

Experts recommend 400IU of vitamin D each day - the amount in four glasses of fat free or lowfat [milk](#).

More information: Keast DR, Fulgoni VL, Quann EE, Auestad N. Contributions of milk, dairy products, and other foods to vitamin D intakes in the U.S.: NHANES, 2003. FASEB Journal. 2010;24:745.9.

Provided by Weber Shandwick Worldwide

Citation: Milk Is America's top source of much-needed vitamin D (2010, April 27) retrieved 25 April 2024 from

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