

Everyone should boost intake of vitamin D, IOM says

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(PhysOrg.com) -- The nation's top scientific advisory panel today recommended that adults modestly increase their intake of vitamin D, known as the "sunshine vitamin," from a daily dose of 200 international units to 600 international units. The panel also extended the safe upper limit for adults from 2000 IU to 4000 IU daily.

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) report was release this morning in Washington, D.C., after two years of study and debate. The IOM had not changed its [dietary guidelines](#) for [vitamin D](#) since 1997.

During the last 13 years, though, some studies had suggested that much

higher doses of vitamin D could prevent a variety of illnesses, from bone diseases to strokes and cancer. But the IOM panel said that although more vitamin D is beneficial to bone health, other studies were inconsistent and inconclusive, and therefore taking mega doses over a long period of time might harm some people.

The IOM recommended:

- Everyone ages 1 to 70 should take 600 IU daily.
- Adults older than 70 should take 800 IU daily to optimize bone health.
- The safe upper limit for infants up to 6 months is 1000 IU daily.
- The safe upper limit for infants 6 to 12 months is 1500 IU daily.
- The safe upper limit for children 1 to 3 years old is 2500 IU daily.
- The safe upper limit for children 4 to 8 years old is 3000 IU daily.
- The safe upper limit for everyone older than 8 is 4000 IU daily.

Kevin Fiscella, M.D., a University of Rochester Medical Center family physician who studies health disparities, noted that African Americans often have lower serum vitamin D levels than whites.

He published an observational study earlier this year suggesting a link between D deficiency and a higher number of heart and stroke-related deaths among blacks compared to whites. A second study showed that a lack of vitamin D among blacks may also explain a higher death rate in colon cancer among blacks compared to whites. A third URMCC study suggested a link between lower vitamin D levels among black women and more aggressive breast [cancer](#).

“While most U.S. adults may achieve reasonable blood levels of vitamin D through diet and sun light, national data show that persons with darker skin, particularly African Americans, commonly have D levels believed to be suboptimal,” Fiscella said. “This is particularly true among those who are lactose intolerant and avoid vitamin D fortified milk products. Research is sorely needed among this group to firmly establish optimal levels.”

The IOM report said they believe the majority of Americans are getting sufficient vitamin D, which can be consumed through fortified dairy foods, orange juice, fatty fish, and D-containing dietary supplements, or absorbed through the skin during sun exposure.

Provided by University of Rochester Medical Center

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