

Benefits of regular vitamin D tests remain unproven, study says

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Experts said Monday regular tests for vitamin D levels are not proven to be beneficial or harmful, despite previous research warning of damaging effects of vitamin D deficiencies in adults.

Studies have found that low levels of the vitamin can increase the risk of [bone fractures](#), [heart disease](#), [colorectal cancer](#), diabetes, depression, Alzheimer's disease and death.

But the US Preventative Services Task Force (USPSTF) said there was no evidence that getting regularly tested for sufficient vitamin D decreased health risks.

"Current evidence is insufficient to assess the balance of benefits and harms of screening for vitamin D deficiency in asymptomatic adults," USPSTF said in a statement.

"We found no direct evidence on effects of screening for vitamin D deficiency versus no screening on clinical outcomes."

The experts from the federal panel said that tests should be ordered on a case-by-case basis and should not be conducted universally.

People get vitamin D from sunlight and from oily fish such as salmon, tuna or mackerel, as well as milk, eggs and cheese. It is also available in supplement form and is a key component for healthy bones and muscle strength.

A 2010 report by the US Institute of Medicine concluded that vitamin D was essential for bone health but did not find that a deficiency causes disease.

The Institute recommends 600 milligrams per day for adults under 70 years old and 800 milligrams for older people.

A recent study in the *British Medical Journal* based on medical records from 95,766 people in Denmark found that reduced vitamin D levels increased the risk of mortality by 30 percent and boosted the risk of cancer-related deaths by 40 percent.

However, the researchers found no link between vitamin D deficiency and cardiovascular deaths.

About one billion around the globe are thought to have low vitamin D levels.

The elderly can be particularly vulnerable to such a deficiency because their skin is less adept at converting sunlight into vitamin D.

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