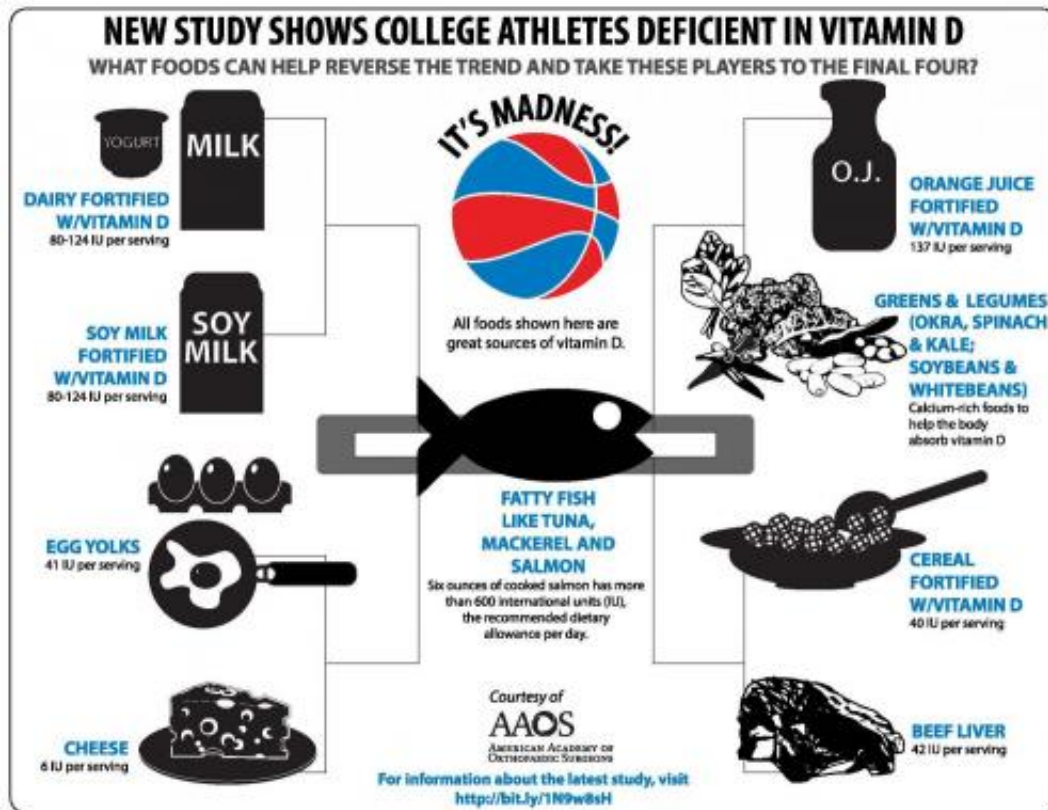


# More than one-third of Division I college athletes may have low vitamin D levels

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A balanced diet can boost Vitamin D levels. Credit: American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons

A new study presented today at the 2015 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) found that more than one-third of elite, Division I college athletes may have low levels of

vitamin D, which is critical in helping the body to absorb calcium needed to maintain bone mass, and to minimize musculoskeletal pain and injury risk.

Up to 1 billion people globally have insufficient or deficient vitamin D levels. Vitamin D is found in fish, regularly added to milk and dairy products in the U.S., and available as a supplement. Vitamin D also is produced in the body through sun exposure.

"Although multiple studies have demonstrated a high prevalence of vitamin D insufficiency across various populations, there is a paucity of data regarding elite level [athletes](#)," said orthopaedic surgeon and lead study author Diego Villacis, MD, administrative chief resident physician at the University of Southern California. "Recent studies also have demonstrated that vitamin D levels have a direct relationship with muscle power, force, velocity and optimal [bone mass](#)."

In this study, which appeared in the February 2014 online issue of Sports Health, researchers measured the serum 25-hydroxyvitamin D (serum 25) levels of 223 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) athletes (121 men and 102 women) between June 2012 and August 2012. The mean serum 25 level for the athletes, enrolled in a broad range of indoor and outdoor sports, was  $40.1 \pm 14.9$  ng/mL (32 ng/mL is considered normal; 20 to

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