

Title: Preventing Falls with Vitamin D

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Abstract: Vitamin D is known to have direct effects on muscle strength and can improve strength, function, and balance in elderly individuals. Supplementation of 700-1000 IU Vitamin D in individuals over age 65 has been shown to decrease falls by 19%. This effect is present within 2-5 months of treatment and lasts 12 months after cessation of treatment.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Medline Plus: Vitamin D

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginfo/natural/patient-vitamind.html>

Over 65? Take lots of Vitamin D to prevent a fall. Reuters Health. October 2, 2009.

http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/news/fullstory_90163.html

Calcium and Vitamin D important at every age.

http://www.niams.nih.gov/Health_Info/Bone/Bone_Health/Nutrition/default.asp

Bischoff-Ferrari HA, Dawson-Hughes B, et al. Fall prevention with supplemental and active forms of vitamin D: a meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials. *BMJ* 2009;339:b3692.

Preventing Falls with Vitamin D

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VITAMIN D AND YOU

Why is Vitamin D important?

Each year, 1 in 3 people aged 65 and older, and 1 in 2 aged 50 and older, fall at least once. Nine percent of these accidents require a trip to the emergency room and around 6% result in a broken bone. Many elderly people who fall end up in nursing homes.

Vitamin D, together with calcium, is known to help form and maintain strong bones. Having strong bones decreases the risk of broken bones. Vitamin D also has positive effects on muscles and can improve strength, function, and balance.

Vitamin D and fall prevention

Taking 700-1000 IU Vitamin D in people over age 65 has been shown to decrease falls by 19-26%. This effect is present within two to five months of starting vitamin D therapy and lasts 12 months after one stops taking vitamin D.

Why might I be deficient in vitamin D?

People can be low in vitamin D for a number of reasons. This can include:

- Lack of sunlight
- Lack of vitamin D in the diet
- Liver and kidney diseases
- Poor absorption in the gut
- Certain medications

How can I get more vitamin D?

Vitamin D is found in many foods such as fish, eggs, fortified milk, and cod liver oil. The sun also contributes to the body's production of vitamin D. As little as 10 minutes of sun per day can prevent vitamin deficiencies. Vitamin D supplements are also available in over the counter pill-form, and can be found at your local pharmacy. You should ask your primary care physician prior to starting vitamin D supplementation.

Taking between 700 to 1000 IU per day of vitamin D supplements provides the most protection against falls.

