



May 12, 2010 – Grand Rapids, MI

Vitamin Dumb

I don't usually write about research studies during the week, but I just couldn't wait on this one. In the latest JAMA, researchers reported on the effects of vitamin D on fractures and falls in a group of over 1,500 women over the age of 70. The results were surprising in that the vitamin D group had more falls and more fractures than the placebo group. Well, maybe not so surprising when you look at the study's methods.

People remembering to take their medications as well as their supplements is a problem; that was illustrated in the study I wrote about this past Saturday. So how did the researchers choose to address that issue? Give the women a year's dose once a year! That's right—they gave these subjects 500,000 IU vitamin D once a year. I was virtually rendered speechless. And that never happens.

In what universe did these researchers think this was a good idea? Would they give someone a year's supply of cholesterol-lowering medication or pain medication in one dose just because they don't remember to take their meds every day?

What in nature would give them a model to follow? If you spend all day in the sun without sunblock, your body shuts down the production of vitamin D automatically—that's why you can't overdose on D from the sun. But when it comes to oral intake from food, it's humanly impossible to get anywhere near that amount in one day.

In an editorial in the same issue, the authors suggested that medical professionals examine how vitamin D is administered. Maybe administering 50,000 to 100,000 IU doses isn't such a good idea. Gee, ya think?

Taking up to 10,000 IU vitamin D3 is safe, and 2,000 to 6,000 IU per day is a good goal. But this study illustrates that there's no need to megadose and probably no benefit either. Doing that is like taking Vitamin Dumb.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

Reference:

1. JAMA. 2010;303(18):1815-1822.

WGVU FM 88.5/95.3 **npr** *Straight Talk on Health*

Hear Dr. Chet's take on the latest health news and research—listen to *Straight Talk on Health* at 7 p.m. Sunday in the Eastern Time Zone on WGVU-FM 88.5 or 95.3, or listen live via the Internet by going to www.wgvu.org and clicking on "Listen Live" in the gray bar at the top.

The health information in this message is designed for educational purposes only. It's not a substitute for medical advice from your healthcare provider, and you should not use it to diagnose or treat a health problem or disease. It's designed to motivate you to work toward better health, and that includes seeing your healthcare professional regularly. If what you've read raises any questions or concerns about health problems or possible diseases, talk to your healthcare provider today.

Subscribe to the Message from Dr. Chet at DrChet.com — © Chet Zelasko PhD LLC