

Vitamin D Lowers Inflammation

Contributed by John Jacob Cannell, MD, executive director of [The Vitamin D Council](#)

Researchers in Belgium appear to be the first to show that simple, natural and cheap vitamin D (cholecalciferol) lowers C-Reactive Protein (CRP), a measure of inflammation in the body, in critically ill patients.

Even small amounts of vitamin D, about 500 IU, lowered inflammation by more than 25 percent in a small group of critically ill patients. Another marker of inflammation (IL-6) was reduced even more. The researchers also found that [critically ill patients were profoundly deficient in vitamin D](#).

In another study, researchers found that [vitamin D deficiency is associated with increased inflammation](#) in otherwise healthy people. Increased inflammation in the body can increase the risk of chronic inflammatory conditions, including coronary heart disease (CHD) and diabetes. Further, the researchers found that inflammation was lowered by simple vitamin D.

As vitamin D deficiency is associated with numerous illnesses with inflammatory components, such as hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, autoimmune illness and heart disease, the findings were important. The authors concluded, "This finding provides a possible mechanism for tissue damage in chronic inflammatory conditions, including CHD and diabetes."

Inflammation in the body may be as important as cholesterol in determining the risk of heart disease. Unlike cholesterol alone, cholesterol and inflammation together predict a substantial number of cases of heart disease.

Various studies show that vitamin D deficiency is widespread among the critically ill and suggest that that vitamin D deficiency may contribute to the inflammatory basis of various illnesses.

For example, earlier this year researchers studied patients with congestive heart failure and found elevated levels of TNF, another marker of inflammation. They also found critically low levels of calcidiol [25(OH)D], the only reliable marker of vitamin D, and even found low levels of calcitriol, the active form of vitamin D that

is usually low only in those who are severely vitamin D deficient.

They concluded [vitamin D deficiency might contribute to the development of congestive heart failure \(CHF\)](#).

It is important to note that vitamin D's anti-inflammatory actions in humans have long been suspected. For example, several studies using compounds similar to vitamin D have been shown to [significantly reduce inflammation and improve the patients' condition](#) when given to [patients suffering from rheumatoid arthritis](#).

Dr. Mercola's Comment:

CRP is elevated when there is inflammation going on somewhere in the body, and chronic inflammation is a risk factor for a number of conditions including coronary heart disease (CHD) and diabetes. Numerous studies have shown that vitamin D lowers inflammation.

Folks, we are in the midst of a radical revision of vitamin D understanding. The leading vitamin D scientists in the world have changed their position within the last few years and have started the warning sirens that most of traditional medicine was dead wrong when it comes to sun avoidance.

Following the ridiculous recommendations of avoiding the sun has caused a minimum of 20,000 extra cancers per year, and it is far more likely the number actually exceeds 50,000. And that is just cancer deaths. It does not include heart disease or autoimmune diseases like MS or rheumatoid arthritis.

The old RDA of 400 units was only put together to prevent rickets. It was established long before the appreciation of sun exposure and optimized vitamin D levels. The requirements for vitamin D are far closer to 10 times the current RDA, or 4,000 units. If you only took the RDA of 400 units of vitamin D and avoided the sun you can be virtually guaranteed you would be vitamin D deficient, just like over 85 percent of the country currently is.

This is why it is crucial that you [have your vitamin D levels tested now](#). By far, the vast majority of people reading this right now have far too little vitamin D in their blood. Over 85 percent of people have levels below 32, which is considered deficient, but it is possible to overdose on vitamin D.

In my practice we don't like to see patient levels go much above 50, but 55 is probably a perfect level and anything above 60 is likely to be toxic. [One study](#) found cancer started to occur at 80. So, be smart and get your vitamin D level tested.

We routinely put people on 10,000 units a day or more of vitamin D safely as long as we monitor them. It is important to understand that most of us get 10,000 units on a sunny summer day if we have significant exposure.

If you are a health care professional I would strongly urge you to consider subscribing to [Dr. Cannell's excellent vitamin D newsletter](#). The top vitamin D scientists in the world write it, and it is sent to the top scientists in the world with the intention of sparking the important changes that need to occur in the U.S. recommendations. I have learned quite a bit about vitamin D already, but it seems that every issue Dr. Cannel surprises me with new and exciting information about the health benefits of vitamin D.