

Premium Blend

Newsletter

Have you heard? Sunlight prevents cancer

1 August

This article is especially important to you if you:

- believe the news and media about avoiding sunlight
- live in South Australia
- have dark-coloured skin
- spend little time outdoors or when you do have only your face and hands exposed
- would like to reduce your risk of cancer



The benefits of sunlight and its subsequent vitamin D3 production is finally starting to get the attention it deserves. I would like to share with you a brief overview of its

amazing multitude of roles in the body, and most importantly; how to reap the benefits of sunlight, and hopefully shed some light on the confusion about supplementation.

When the UVB rays from sunlight hit your skin, they convert cholesterol into Vitamin D3, the active form which your body uses in hundreds of biological processes and influences a huge number of genes which keep us functioning optimally. Below is a summary of the benefits of having optimal levels of D3 in your blood at all times:

- prevention of a wide range of cancers, including deadly skin cancers, breast, colon, lung and prostate.
- a powerful immune regulator: the ability to prevent coughs and colds as well as any number of other viral and bacterial infections

- may be very important in ensuring your arteries remain free of plaque
- deficiency may be a contributing factor to preeclampsia (leading cause of premature delivery and maternal and fetal illness and death)
- support healthy kidney function
- enhance your muscle strength
- help produce optimal blood pressure
- help keep your bones strong and healthy
- support cardiovascular health

How long do I need to spend in the sun?

There is very little risk of overdosing on Vitamin D from sun exposure, it has an elegant feedback mechanism to make sure this doesn't occur. But the advice to make sure you don't become sunburnt is as prudent as ever. Safe sunlight exposure is a must. As a side-note; when ingested for about 30 days the antioxidant *Astaxanthin* may help to add protection from sunburn - kind of like an internal sunscreen! Remember these tips for getting good sun exposure:

- Build up your time in the sun gradually at the beginning of the season, starting with perhaps 10 minutes per day at midday and increasing as the season progresses.

- Strive for at least 40% of your body to be uncovered and exposed to the sun.
- Stay out in the sun just long enough that your skin turns the very lightest shade of pink (this may not be feasible if you have darker skin)
- Use only natural sun screens. Most commercial creams have a variety of chemicals linked to *increases* in cancer!

The time of the day and the season matters

Perhaps the most crucial point of this whole article is knowing when during the year sunlight will be of benefit. Have you ever wondered why you can spend 10 minutes in the sun in February and may become pink or even burnt if you're particularly fair, and then you can spend hours in the sun in July and have no visible effect at all? It all has to do with the angle of the sun at different times of the year. Depending on *where you are* on our globe and the *month of the year* and the *time of the day* will determine the angle of the sun in your particular location. In general, if the sun is above 50 degrees, there will be enough UVB to make the conversion to Vitamin D3 in your skin, however if its below this critical angle, there wont be any vitamin D3 production.

“you need an average of 10-15 minutes of sunlight every day to prevent cancer”

In Adelaide, between approximately September 10th-March 31st, at Midday, the sun will be at 50 degrees or greater, and therefore there will be sufficient UVB to produce Vitamin D3. Just bear in mind that during the summer months the sun is at significantly higher angles than 50 degrees at midday and therefore you require less time in the sun.

Contrary to popular belief, the middle of the day is the *best* time for sun exposure due to the relative ratios of UVB to UVA light. At midday the ratio of UVB rays is higher and these are the Vitamin D producing rays. The further away from midday that you move, the greater the ratio swings to UVA rays, and these have been implicated in causing skin cancer. So it is better to spend a shorter time in

the sun during the middle of the day rather than more time in the mid-morning or afternoon.

Should I supplement?

The only way to know what your current D3 levels are is with a blood test. Ask your doctor or local pathology lab for the 25(OH)D also called the 25-hydroxyvitamin D test. The optimal value is between 115-128 nmol/l. If you keep your levels in this range you will give yourself the most protective benefit.

Most current research points to adults requiring 5000-6000 IU of D3 daily, year round. Consider that a reasonably short amount of time in the sun in summer will give you around 10,000 IU.

The results of blood levels often indicate the need for oral D3 supplementation during the months with no UVB exposure as discussed above. Look for a supplement that contains vitamin D3 (not D2) and a dosage around 5000 IU is recommended.

Below is a table showing blood levels of D3. (Take note they are in ng/mol):

**VITAMIN D LEVELS
25 HYDROXY D**

Deficient	Optimal	Treat Cancer and Heart Disease	Excess
< 50 ng/ml	50-70 ng/ml	70-100 ng/ml	> 100 ng/ml

Multiply ng/ml by 2.5 to convert to nmol/litre

If you have a serious health concern such as cancer, MS, rheumatoid arthritis or Chrohn's disease, then one of the most important parts of your treatment should be to optimise your vitamin D levels. In fact most studies suggest your levels should actually be *above* what is recommended for most people and into the 70-100 range as shown above.



I would like to acknowledge mercola.com for providing most of the information in this article. If you would like to learn more, visit his website and download the free ebook.

Dr David Pierotti