

Vitamin D: Another Reason for Everyone To Have More Fun in the Sun this Summer

By Richard Hansen

The research is mounting about the importance of Vitamin D and the dangers of deficiency.

Vitamin D, sometimes referred to as the "Sunshine Vitamin," is synthesized by the body from sunlight.

To ensure a person has an adequate Vitamin D level, it is recommended that they receive at least twenty minutes of sun exposure a day. It is also important that a significant portion of skin is exposed, as clothing impedes the body's absorption.

The most common dietary sources of Vitamin D are eggs and Vitamin D-fortified milk. Most Vitamin D-fortified food and supplements contain Vitamin D2. The most bioavailable form, however, is Vitamin D3.

As people spend more time indoors, getting enough Vitamin D can be a challenge.

This is a growing concern for children, who seem to be more likely to spend their free time playing video games, instead of playing outdoors, these days.

Recent research has revealed that many otherwise healthy children may be suffering from a Vitamin D deficiency.

A study published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition this year addressed the prevalence of this problem. The researchers tested the Vitamin D levels of 382 children in the United States.

These tests, along with a dietary assessment, revealed that 53% of the children had low Vitamin D levels.

These findings are significant because, aside from having a noticeable Vitamin D deficiency, the children appeared overall to be in good health.

The primary worry is that a deficiency can impair bone development. In extreme cases, Vitamin D deficiency can place children at risk of bone diseases such as rickets.



Rickets is a childhood bone condition that, until recently, was practically non-existent in the United States. This change was in part due to the fortification of certain foods and milk with Vitamin D.

In the past few decades cases of rickets among American children has been on the rise. One culprit that has been pinpointed for this is Vitamin D deficiency.

The best indicator of Vitamin D levels is a blood test that measures a Vitamin D compound, known as 25-hydroxyvitamin D. For adults, an abnormally low Vitamin D blood level is thought to be below 20 ng/mL.

While Vitamin D is primarily thought to be critical for musculoskeletal health, it has also been tied to a host of other health conditions.

Studies have shown that older adults with low Vitamin D levels are more likely to suffer from depression and perform poorly on cognitive

tests. Vitamin D deficiency has also been linked to hypertension, cancer, multiple sclerosis, obesity and type 1 diabetes.

High-Fat Ketogenic Diet Helps Some Children with Epilepsy

A study published in **Lancet Neurology** this June provides evidence that a stringent high-fat diet, sometimes referred to as the ketogenic diet, can be an effective treatment strategy for managing epilepsy.

The study included 145 epileptic children, ages 2 to 16, who had never tried the diet before.

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Dr. Carl's Corner

From the Archives...



Excellent efforts by nurses of the Indian Health Service in New Mexico tied the Salmonella Saint-Paul outbreak to tomatoes found in stores on the Navajo Reservation.

Similar efforts at the Minnesota Department of Health linked jalapeno peppers to a Salmonella

SaintPaul outbreak back to a distributor in McAllen, TX that received the peppers from Mexico.

This food safety story is not about ONE jalapeno pepper, as some articles have represented.

It involves a number of jalapeno PEPPERS in some UN-NAMED food establishment that received shipment(s) of PEP-PERS via INTERSTATE COMMERCE from a NAMED distribu-tor in McAllen, TX following IMPORTATION from Mexico.

During wartime, like now, all citizens are called to a higher level of conduct and action.

If members of ANY industry or organization act knowingly to deceive the American government, subvert its laws or alter policy or practices in any way that would thereby endanger the health and welfare of the public or those who defend our coun-try, it would fall far below the higher standards of conduct and action expected in a time of war.

With the current level of agricultural, scientific and medical knowledge and historical understanding of how to grow food on the farm and deliver safe, quality and healthy food to the the table, it is reasonable to expect a REASONABLE accounting of events by Congress and take appropriate ethical, effective, ef-ficient and economical actions to safeguard our food supply.

High-Fat Diet and Epilepsy - Cont.

The children selected also had at least seven seizures a week and had not responded to at least two anti-seizure medications.

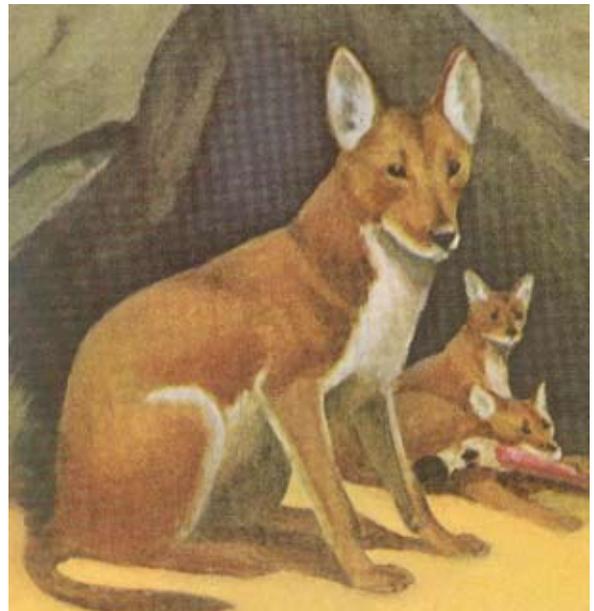
In the trial, one group started the diet right away, while the rest of the participants waited three months to begin. It was found that seizures were reduced by half among 38% of the children in the first group. In addition, five participants in that group had a 90% decrease in seizures.

Patients in the control group only saw a 6% reduction in sei-zures.

The ketogenic diet is high in fat, and low in carbohydrates and sugar. The diet revolves around a process known as ketosis, where the body burns fat rather than sugar for energy.

The diet call for maintaining a critical balance between fat, protein and carbohydrates. If a patient strays from the diet once he has started it, there can be serious consequences, including having more seizures.

The diet also requires monitoring by a team of informed health professionals. The Epilepsy Foundation, emphasizes that while the diet has been shown to be effective, it is "not a do-it-yourself" diet, but rather "a serious medical treatment."



How did prehistoric dogs get their daily vitamins? Naturally.

TO THIS VERY DAY, striking similarities remain between the dog and his wild ancestors. Especially in eating habits and basic taste preferences.

Ancestral dogs devoured their kills *completely*—a practice which automatical-ly gave them a natural source of vitamins and minerals. Modern dog diets lacking this primitive appeal make for dull eat-ing, and that's only the beginning of the problem!

Today's canine lifestyle puts the re-sponsibility for complete nutrition on you. Your dog won't find everything he needs in his dish unless you put it there. Adequate vitamins and minerals are essential for the best of health.

Because your veterinarian is an au-thority on all aspects of animal health, he knows the vitamin-mineral needs of your dog better than anyone else. Ask him about chewable, tasty, easy-to-feed Vi-Sorbit. They provide the extra

Last month we discussed how having a dog can be good for your health, but what about the health of your dog?

Avid MENDWise reader Will B. from Navasota, TX sent us this amusing ad from a 1973 edition of National Geographic. He thought it begged the question: Why not MEND supplements for dogs?

Laurie's Corner

Now that summer has finally arrived in Minnesota, gardening has become a major topic of conversation (as opposed to weather during the rest of the year.) In MENDWise last month, I laid out the plans for our "Victory Garden." Those plans included Richard as its major architect. Richard, however, is taking a two-month "sabbatical," working with Wilderness Ventures (based in Jackson Hole, Wyoming), leading and co-leading fly-fishing and camping expeditions. We miss him not only in the office, but also in the garden!

As I previously mentioned, June 15th is the magic date to start planting. Saturday, May 31st was a perfect, summery day and it was tempting to start that day, especially since Richard was still in town. Thank heavens we didn't. For those of you who live in and around Minneapolis, you probably remember what happened late that afternoon – a hail and straight-line wind-storm that looked like a blizzard! The ground was covered with two inches of hail! Needless to say, everyone's gardens were ruined. The next day we ran into one lady who had just planted \$300.00 worth of plants in her garden – which were totally demolished!

The following Saturday, June 7th was another day that looked perfect for planting (and Richard was still here, too). We were saved again, because that night straight-line winds came through our neighborhood! So, waiting until June 15th proved to be just right!

The exception to the June 15th rule was our potatoes. In April, Carl and Richard planted 52 seed potatoes of 3 different varieties. As a novice, I marveled at how they planted them and then placed mounds of soil on top. When my Dad was 16, he spent an entire summer at Nevers Dam (at Wild River State Park in St. Croix Falls) and grew and tended one whole acre of potatoes and one of corn (with some help). You can imagine what a workout this was for Dad and his co-workers and, no doubt, he developed

enough muscles to become a football player at the University of Minnesota (during the Golden Gopher era)!

I've learned several **gardening tips** from Carl and Richard. The first one really surprised me. After they planted the potatoes, they put a **tarp** over about a 1 X 5 foot area of the garden. I thought it was pretty ugly and had no idea why they had done that. When we were ready to plant the other items, Carl removed the tarp and, Voila, all the weeds and vegetation had died and there was just beautiful, black soil, all ready for planting!

Another tip I learned from them was **hair!** We love all the bunnies in our yard (and they, us) since we use no chemicals whatsoever. I, however, didn't want them eating all of our now edible (for humans, too) garden! So, I've been collecting hair from my brush and strewing it around the garden. It is working pretty well – except for the green peppers and the cabbage. Our next project will be putting up a fence!

Another tip I learned was to form sort of a **well** at the stem of the plants we had just transplanted. So, when we water or when it rains, it keeps the plants moistened longer.

Then, because I'd expressed interest in having a "rain garden," Carl took out several native wild flower plants from the back and started a new garden in our front yard at the bottom of the slope that leads to the street. We learned about rain gardens from my sister-in-law, Pam, who has worked with the Alliance for Sustainability (www.afors.org) when we attended one of their sustainability conferences

this past March. What really sold me on a rain garden was seeing a chart with the difference in root structures between grass (minimal) and native plants (really long so they hold moisture much longer than grass)!

Another tip I learned from the conference was **composting**. Carl has composted before, but I never had, and now that I was going to become a gardener, I wanted to start composting! The first thing I noticed about composting was that our amount of garbage went down to about zero! We routinely have lots of fruit and vegetable peelings, which are perfect to compost!

I also learned, surprisingly, that coffee grounds (and the paper filters) and tea bags are good to compost. And, table scraps are good, too, but no meat – I guess that attracts the flies. And, I'm reluctant to put fish scraps into it, due to the large population of cats in the neighborhood! I received a tip from our friend, Jerri: put the compost items in a plastic, resealable bag and when it gets full, take it out to the compost (and then rinse out the bag, air dry and re-use.) Carl has a very large, black container, which is what we are putting on top of our compost pile. Black is key for attracting the sunlight, which will speed up the composting. I'll keep you (com) posted!

While we are waiting for the fruits (or shall I say vegetables) of our labors, here is a colorful and crunchy summer salad recipe from our friend, Wendy, who received it from her friend, Cookie (thank you to you both)!

Chayote and Cauliflower Salad

1 Chayote,* washed, peeled and diced
 1 small head Cauliflower, washed and cut into small bite-sized flowerettes
 1 cup Snap Peas, washed, stringed, clipped at the ends and cut in thirds
 ½ cup Ripe Olives, quartered lengthwise
 1 large Avocado, washed, peeled, cored and diced
 ½ pint small Grape or Cherry Tomatoes, washed
 4 Eggs, hard-cooked, diced
 Balsamic Vinaigrette, bottled or homemade

Mix all together and enjoy!

*I'd never heard of Chayote before. Wendy explained it as sort of like "jicama" but, easier to peel and dice and has more flavor!

It is known as a "vegetable pear" (and looks like one) and is most available in late summer and early fall.

I made it for dinner the other night (though I didn't have the Chayote available) and it was superb!

It would work great for a picnic, too!

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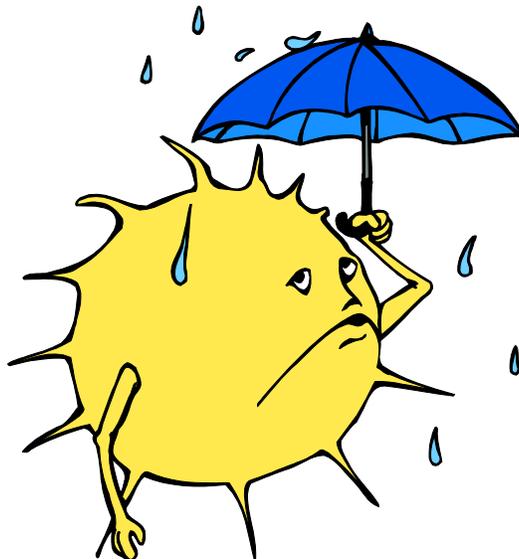
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