



Osteoporosis Canada

Ostéoporose Canada



COPING

A newsletter from COPN

Special Edition: July 16, 2010

Remember: You can live well with osteoporosis!

If you have received this newsletter from the Canadian Osteoporosis Patient Network
(COPN)

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*We are pleased to bring you this special edition of COPING covering the recent release
of the new guidelines for vitamin D intake*

- 1. Feature article: New vitamin D guidelines - Physicians say
Canadians should be taking more supplements**
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New vitamin D guidelines - Physicians say Canadians should be taking more supplements

New and updated guidelines on recommended vitamin D intake have been published this week in the online issue of the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* (CMAJ).

Dr. David Hanley, professor at the University of Calgary Faculty of Medicine, and member of Osteoporosis Canada's Scientific Advisory Council, is the lead author of the paper on behalf of Osteoporosis Canada.

"Osteoporosis Canada's current recommendations on vitamin D intake for Canadians are more than 10 years old, and since then, there has been a lot of new and exciting research in this area," says Hanley, who is also a member of the McCaig Institute for Bone and Joint Health and the Calgary Institute for Population and Public Health (CIPPH) at the University of Calgary. "Because of these research advances, we felt it

was time to update Osteoporosis Canada's 2002 Clinical Practice Guidelines for the treatment and management of osteoporosis."

Vitamin D, often called the sunshine vitamin, is mainly obtained from sun exposure of our skin. However, Canadians are not getting enough. Supplements are necessary to obtain adequate levels because a person's diet has minimal impact. "Canadians are at risk of vitamin D deficiency from October to April because winter sunlight in northern latitudes does not allow for adequate vitamin D production," says **Julie Foley, president & CEO of Osteoporosis Canada**. "Also, because vitamin D requirements for an individual may vary considerably depending on many factors, it's very important to check with your physician about how much vitamin D you should be taking."

Vitamin D is essential to the treatment of osteoporosis because it promotes calcium absorption from the diet and is necessary for normal bone growth. Some research suggests it may also ward off immune diseases, infection and cancer.

The new guidelines recommend daily supplements of 400 to 1000 IU for adults under age 50 without osteoporosis or conditions affecting vitamin D absorption. For adults over 50, supplements of between 800 and 2000 IU are recommended.

"A daily supplement of 25 mcg (800 IU) should now be regarded as a minimum dose for adults with osteoporosis," writes Hanley with co-authors. "Canadians can safely take daily vitamin D supplements up to the current definition of tolerable upper intake level (50 mcg [2000 IU]), but doses above that require medical supervision."

The authors conclude with a call for research into optimal doses and safe upper limits for vitamin D intake. Despite a great deal of new research in the past decade, these major clinical questions still have not been addressed.

For more information about the new vitamin D guidelines, including frequently asked questions, please visit the Osteoporosis Canada website at www.osteoporosis.ca

Funny bone

Now that I'm 'older' (but refuse to grow up), here's what I've discovered:

~ The only time the world beats a path to your door is when you're in the bathroom.

Notices/references

i. Remember, it is important for you to eat a healthy diet, get some appropriate exercise, and take your calcium and vitamin D. If your doctor has prescribed a medication don't forget to take it as directed.

ii. Your regular **COPING** newsletter will now be taking a summer break and will return in September. If any important news occurs in that time we will send out a special

issue. Don't forget that you can also visit www.osteoporosis.ca for up-to-date information.

iii. Have a wonderful summer!

iv. The material contained in this newsletter is provided for general information only. It should not be relied on to suggest a course of treatment for a particular individual or as a substitute for consultation with qualified health professionals who are familiar with your individual medical needs. Should you have any health care related questions or concerns, you should contact your physician. You should never disregard medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read in this or any newsletter.

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From time to time throughout the year, Special Editions like this one will bring you breaking news on important developments related to osteoporosis. Regular editions of the COPING Newsletter will return in September.