
Study: Vitamin D Protects Against Cold and Flu



Findings from a global collaborative study confirms that Vitamin D supplementation can protect against respiratory tract infection. The study was conducted with 11,000 participants and its findings are published in *The BMJ*.

According to Carlos Camargo, MD, DrPH, of the Department of Emergency Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) and the study's senior author, Vitamin D is critical for both bone and muscle health. In addition, Vitamin D helps the body fight acute respiratory infection.

Previous observational studies also suggest that low Vitamin D levels are associated with greater susceptibility to acute respiratory infection. However, only some clinical trials confirm the protective ability of Vitamin D supplementation and meta-analysis of these trials offer conflicting results with respect to its protective effects.

The purpose of this study was to resolve these discrepancies. The researchers conducted an individual participant meta-analysis of trials that had been conducted across several countries including the U.S, Canada and the UK. Unlike traditional meta-analyses, this individual participant meta-analysis separated data from each individual participant in order to produce a higher resolution analysis of the data.

Findings suggest that daily or weekly supplementation of Vitamin D had the greatest beneficial effect for individuals with the most significant Vitamin D deficiency and cut their risk of respiratory infection by half. In addition, all participants reported some beneficial effects from regular supplementation of Vitamin D. Occasional high doses of Vitamin D however were not found to provide any significant benefits.

"Acute respiratory infections are responsible for millions of emergency department visits in the United States," says Camargo, who is a professor of Emergency Medicine at Harvard Medical School. "These results could have a major impact on our health system and also support efforts to fortify foods with vitamin D, especially in populations with high levels of vitamin D deficiency."

Source: [The BMJ](#)

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