



Doctors' Choice

NUTRITION

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In the News

Vitamin D and Flu Prevention

The last few weeks have been glorious here in Vancouver – a testament to why we absolutely love living in this city. The abundance of sunshine can be a great way for us to start “loading up” on vitamin D for health reasons. For example, a very recent randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study published 2 months ago in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition examined the relationship between vitamin D and flu (seasonal influenza A) in schoolchildren. In this study, vitamin D3 (1200 IU) or placebo was provided to these children between December 2008 and March 2009. The primary outcome measures of this study was the incidence of influenza A, diagnosed with specimen from antigen testing in a nasopharyngeal swab. Results of the study showed 10.8% of children taking vitamin D developed the flu during this time compared to 18.6% in the placebo group. This study suggests that vitamin D may play a protective role in reducing the incidence of influenza A. (*Am J Clin Nutr.* 2010 May; 91(5):1255-60).

Naturopathic Options:

Food sources of vitamin D can be attained from fish like sardines (100g = 1150-1570 IU vitamin D), mackerel (100g=820-1100 IU), salmon (100g=150-550IU); dairy sources like milk (1 cup = 100 IU vitamin D), cheese (12-20 IU vitamin D), Rice Dream (rice milk) (1 cup = 60 IU); non-dairy sources like mushrooms provide 60-90 IU vitamin D in 100g serving. Supplementation gives higher levels of vitamin D. For example, halibut liver oil (100g=16,800 IU vitamin D) and codliver oil (100g=1200 IU vitamin D).

Aside from vitamin D, there are a myriad of naturopathic options for the prevention of colds and flu. These include my personal favourite “*Dr. Hoo's Cold Buster Formula*” which many of you already know and love. Aside from this herbal concoction, regular intravenous “*Myers' cocktail*” can also be very beneficial. This form of intravenous therapy was developed by Dr. John Myers, MD from Baltimore, Maryland and has been reported to be provided to numerous celebrity athletes and entertainers like the infamous Michael Jackson. Regardless, this therapy includes water soluble vitamins like vitamin C, B5, B6, B12, B Complex, minerals like Calcium and Magnesium for the purpose of increasing energy and immune function.

Advice from Dr. Aaron Hoo

The role of vitamin D in health is plentiful; an adult spending 10 minutes a day in the sun without sunscreen can provide approximately 2000 IU of vitamin D; in contrast, applying sunscreen with an SPF of 30 reduces the ability of the skin to produce vitamin D3 by 99%. The take home message here is to simply spend about 5-10 minutes a day in the sun without sunscreen for your body to produce vitamin D naturally, BUT do lather a generous amount of sunscreen with at least SPF30 if you are going to be spending any longer than 10 minutes in the sun.

Otherwise, consider checking out my online store: http://www.doctorschoicenutrition.ca/online_store.html, log in with your username and password and look for the following products: **D31000 and EPA DHA Extra Strength** (fish oils) in capsule or lemon flavoured liquid.

Featured Recipe

BERRY FREEZE – DESSERT (serves 4)

Ingredients: 1 lb. frozen strawberries, slightly thawed (or 1 pt. fresh berries, frozen slightly); ¾ cup part skim ricotta; 3 tbsp. all fruit strawberry jam; fresh strawberries for garnish (optional)

Blend slightly frozen berries in food processor. Slowly add ricotta and then jam, blending all the while. Serve immediately with a fresh strawberry, if desired.

Bon a petit!



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