

Vitamin D May Help Protect Against Parkinson's

Abstracted by Greg Arnold, DC, CSCS, from "Serum Vitamin D and the Risk of Parkinson Disease" in the July 2010 issue of the Archives of Neurology. Posted August 13, 2010.

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Link - <http://www.nowfoods.com/BasicArticles/080077.htm>

Parkinson Disease (PD), characterized by tremors, slowness of movement, stiffness, and difficulty with balance, affects more than 1.5 million Americans, with 60,000 new cases each year (1). The combined direct and indirect costs of PD are estimated at more than \$5.6 billion per year in the U.S. With medication costs for an individual patient averaging \$2,500 a year, and therapeutic surgery costing up to \$100,000 dollars per patient (2) prevention of PD is at a premium. Now a new study (5) has found that maintaining proper blood levels of vitamin D may help lower the risk of Parkinson's.

Building upon a 2008 study showing more than half of Parkinson Disease patients to have a vitamin D deficiency (6), 3,173 patients participating in the Mini-Finland Health Survey (7) who were free of Parkinson Disease provided blood samples throughout the course of the study between 1978 and 2007. The researchers looked at the onset of Parkinson Disease in the patients and measured vitamin D levels from frozen blood samples.

The researchers found that those in the highest 25% of vitamin D blood levels (> 50 nanmoles/Liter) had a 67% reduced risk of Parkinson Disease compared to those in the lowest 25% of vitamin D blood levels (< 25 nmol/L). While the researchers give no recommendations on the vitamin D intake needed to achieve 50 nmol/L, past research has shown that has shown 600 – 1000 IU per day of vitamin D can produce blood levels of 75-112 nmol/L (8, 9, 10).

For the researchers, "The results are consistent with the suggestion that high vitamin D status provides protection against Parkinson disease" though admit that "further studies are thus needed" to establish a definitive cause and effect relationship between vitamin D and Parkinson's Disease.

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