Vitamin D May Help You Dodge Cancer; How To Be Sure You Get Enough

Vitamin D has an illustrious history as a major bone-building nutrient required for calcium absorption and bone growth. But recent revelations about D's roles in the body have led scientists to view this nutrient in a whole new light.

"Scientists have discovered that essentially every cell in the body has receptors for active vitamin D, which wouldn't be there if they didn't have a function," says noted vitamin D researcher Michael Holick, Ph.D., M.D., of Boston University. A large and expanding body of research has suggested potential links far beyond bones, such as between vitamin D status and immune diseases like multiple sclerosis, type 1 diabetes and rheumatoid arthritis, as well as between D and chronic diseases like cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes.

One of the most impressive and fastest growing areas of vitamin D research is D's possible role in preventing cancer, especially of the breast, colon and prostate. Moreover, a number of scientists think D may have a role in surviving cancer, not just preventing it.

As a result of all these connections, many experts believe that current recommendations for vitamin D intake are too low, possibly far too low given modern lifestyles lived mostly indoors and public health initiatives that encourage the use of sunscreen, which blocks the production of vitamin D in (continued on page 4)

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