

Can Vitamin D Stop Multiple Sclerosis?

When I started law school 30 years ago, I never imagined that a substantial part of my career would be devoted to medical research. I gravitated to representing the victims of injuries, and that type of practice required medical research almost every day. I became the subject of my own research last summer when, at age 53, I was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS). I've read hundreds of articles about every aspect of MS, and it appears that there is little that can be done to cure the disorder; however, there is overwhelming evidence which shows we may prevent MS from developing in our children by maintaining the proper level of Vitamin D in their blood. These are some of the facts I discovered which support this conclusion:

FACT 1

The incidence of MS increases the further you travel north, or south, from the equator. The rise in MS as you travel north or south from the equator is directly related to the availability of UVB (ultraviolet B) sunlight. Our bodies use UVB rays to manufacture vitamin D3. Less UVB sunlight means less vitamin D3, and less vitamin D3, particularly in children, means a higher incidence of MS.

FACT 2

Researchers have known for many years that humans acquire their "immunity" to MS prior to age 15.

FACT 3

In 1997, researchers at the University of Wisconsin – Madison, found that hormonal vitamin D3 (the kind of D3 our bodies produce) completely eliminated the incidence of artificially induced MS in mice.

FACT 4

A Harvard study analyzed data gathered from 90,000 nurses, and found that nurses who took 400 IU of vitamin D (or more) every day had a 40% reduction in the incidence of MS compared to the nurses who did not take vitamin D.

FACT 5

Medical literature points out that, as a society, we are not getting enough vitamin D to impact the incidence of MS. In fact, many physicians, scientists and nutritionists have stated that there is a worldwide vitamin D deficiency epidemic. For 3-6 months of the year (depending on where you live), there is not enough UVB sunshine for humans to make adequate vitamin D.

FACT 6

The U.S. government requires that milk be fortified with vitamin D; however, the amount of vitamin D found in milk and other fortified foods is inadequate to make up for the lack of UVB sunshine during winter months.

FACT 7

According to the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation, approximately 250,000 to 500,000 Americans suffer from MS, costing the United States approximately 20 billion dollars, annually.

I am not a doctor, but a preponderance of evidence shows that we have the potential, right now, to stop MS from affecting the next generation. Just as the polio vaccine controlled polio in the 1950s and 60s, it appears that "vaccinating" our children with vitamin D, until they are at least age fifteen, may prevent MS.

"Vaccination" for MS consists of sunshine, vitamin D supplements, and an occasional blood test – all under the supervision of your physician, and all designed to maintain the proper vitamin D blood level necessary to prevent and control MS.

The economic impact of MS on this country is indeed significant, but it is nothing, however, compared to the suffering of hundreds of thousands of individuals afflicted with the disabling effects of MS...a disease that we have the capacity, right now, to control, if not eliminate.

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—Jim H. Dyer

