



# FAMILY MEDICAL ASSOCIATES OF RALEIGH

## WHAT'S THE FUSS OVER VITAMIN D?

Spring 2011

### UPCOMING EVENTS

- **May is Skin Cancer Awareness Month**
- **May is National Physical Fitness and Sports Month**
- **May is National Osteoporosis Prevention and Awareness Month**
- **June is National Headache Awareness Month**
- **June 5 is National Cancer Survivor's Day**
- **June 27th is National HIV Testing Day**

Vitamin D plays an important role in the body, including the development and calcification of bones. Vitamin D has other health benefits, such as improving muscle and immune function, preventing heart attacks, and decreasing the risk of certain cancers. Adequate exposure to sunlight and the use of dairy products with vitamin D have reduced the incidence of Vitamin D deficiency, but it still remains a significant problem.

Vitamin D is made in the skin under the influence of sunlight. The amount of sunlight needed to make adequate amounts of vitamin D depends on age, skin color, sun exposure, and underlying medical problems. The production of vitamin D from the skin decreases with age. In addition, people who have darker skin need more sun exposure to produce adequate amounts of vitamin D, especially during the winter months.

Another source of vitamin D is foods such as fatty fish, cod liver oil, and eggs. In the United States, commercially fortified cow's milk is the largest source of dietary vitamin D. Although vitamin D is found in cod liver oil, some fish oils also contain high doses of vitamin A. Excessive

vitamin A intake can be associated with side effects, including liver damage and fractures.

Causes of vitamin D deficiency include lack of vitamin D in the diet and inadequate sun exposure either through not enough time outside or the use of sunscreen. Diseases of the intestines such as Crohn's and celiac, kidney and liver disease and surgery such as gastric bypass may affect the body's ability to absorb or utilize vitamin D. True vitamin D deficiency results in complications that we rarely see in America today are low blood calcium, low blood phosphate, softening of bones in adults and rickets.

"Subclinical" vitamin D deficiency, or vitamin D insufficiency, is common. This is defined as a lower than normal vitamin D level that has no visible signs or symptoms. Vitamin D insufficiency is associated with reduced bone density (osteopenia or osteoporosis), lower blood calcium levels, an increased risk of falls, and possibly fractures, an increased risk of heart attacks, auto-immune diseases such as Type I diabetes, and certain cancers. So it is important to treat. Ask your primary provider if you should be tested for low Vitamin D.

## DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT OF VITAMIN D

A low vitamin D level can be diagnosed and monitored with a simple blood test. Testing for vitamin D deficiency is not recommended for everyone. Vitamin D3 (cholecalciferol), the naturally occurring form of Vitamin D, is the supplement we recommend. The recommended dose of vitamin D depends upon the severity of your vitamin D deficiency and any underlying medical conditions. We often prescribe high doses for 3

months to bring the Vitamin D level to "normal" then repeat the blood test. During treatment for vitamin D deficiency, it is also important to consume an adequate amount of calcium. Side effects of vitamin D are uncommon unless the Vitamin D level becomes very elevated and you are taking high dose calcium supplements. To avoid this problem discuss with your primary provider how much

Vitamin D and calcium you should be taking, for what length of time, and repeat blood tests as requested. Also talk to your primary provider about other supplements you are taking.



### IN THIS ISSUE

Vitamin D	Page 1
Skin Cancer	Page 2
Exercise	Page 3
Supplements	Page 3
Our Services	Page 4

## SKIN CANCER: SKIN SELF EXAMINATION



1. First, you need to learn where your birthmarks, moles, and blemishes are and what they usually look like. Check for anything new, such as a change in the size, texture, or color of a mole, or a sore that doesn't heal.
2. Look at the front and back of your body in the mirror, then raise your arms and look at the left and right sides.
3. Bend your elbows and look carefully at your palms and forearms, including the undersides, and upper arms.
4. Check the back and front of your legs.
5. Look between your buttocks and around your genital area.
6. Sit and closely examine your feet including the bottoms of your feet and the spaces between your toes.
7. Look at your face, neck, and scalp. You may want to use a comb or a blow dryer to move hair so that you can see better.
8. By checking yourself regularly, you will get familiar with what is normal for you.

### THE ABCDE'S OF SKIN CANCER:

- **A**symmetry
- **B**order
- **C**olor
- **D**iameter
- **E**levation

Look for any change in a mole that you have or the appearance of a new mole. Most moles appear by age 30. Any moles that appear after age 30 should be watched carefully and brought to the attention of your doctor.

**A** for asymmetry: a mole that, when divided in half, doesn't look the same on both sides

**B** for border: a mole with edges that are blurry or jagged

**C** for color: changes in the color of a mole, including darkening, spread of color, loss of color, or the appearance of multiple colors such as blue, red, white, pink, purple or gray

**D** for diameter: a mole larger than 1/4 inch in diameter

**E** for elevation: a mole that is

raised above the skin and has an uneven surface

Other signs include:

- A mole that bleeds
- A fast-growing mole
- A scaly or crusted growth on the skin
- A sore that won't heal
- A mole that itches

## MELANOMA AND TANNING BEDS

May is Melanoma Skin Cancer Month with special activities nationally and locally. Go to "www.melanomamonday.com" for events near you.

Use this month to start examining your skin for skin cancer. And here are some facts about Indoor Tanning:

- Indoor tanning is considered a *carcinogen* by The World

Health Organization, International Agency for Research on Cancer, The American Medical Association, American Academy of Dermatology, and the American Academy of Pediatrics

- The risk of melanoma is increased by 75% when exposure to tanning beds occurs before the age of 30

- Researchers have found that those using tanning beds often were 2.5-3x more likely to develop melanoma than a person who never tanned indoors
- The Australian Melanoma Family Study identified 76% of the melanoma in patients between the ages of 18-39 to be attributed to tanning bed use.



www.melanomamonday.com

## AN EXERCISE PRESCRIPTION THAT'S EASY TO DO

Exercise is beneficial to the body in many ways. It helps our body use insulin more efficiently, improves our cholesterol, and decrease our blood pressure. All of these things, in turn, decrease our risk for having a heart attack or a stroke.

You do not have to join a gym to get exercise. Walking is an excellent exercise. You even get credit for vacuuming or working in the yard. Exercise is like medicine and it is free!

How much exercise do you need? For overall general good

health it is recommended that you have 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week. To lose weight and keep it off it is recommended that you have 60 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week.

A good gauge of how active you are is to measure the steps you take each day. An active lifestyle is considered 8,000 to 10,000 steps per day. A highly active lifestyle is > 12,500 steps per day.

These steps can be measured by an inexpensive device called

a pedometer. These can be purchased for under \$20 at local stores or online. **The Accusplit XL 120** is a good choice.

Wear your pedometer on your waistband positioned over the front of your leg for a period of one week. Record your steps at the end of each day.

Gradually increase your steps by 1500 to 2000 steps per week until you are at your goal of 10,000 to 12,500 steps per day.

**CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR BEFORE BEGINNING AN EXERCISE PROGRAM.**

Did you know?  
Our practice has a certified personal trainer and a fitness room on-site.  
Ask us for more details!

## STRENGTH TRAINING: GET HEALTHY AND STRONG

Strength training is an important part of a fitness program. You can reduce body fat, increase lean muscle mass, and burn calories more efficiently.

Strength training also helps you develop strong bones, reduce your risk of injury, boost your stamina, manage your chronic health problems, and improve your attention span.

Strength training can be done at home or in the gym. You can do exercises such as pull-ups, abdominal crunches and leg

squats without equipment. Resistance tubing is inexpensive and lightweight, barbells and dumbbells are classic strength training tools, and most fitness centers have weight machines.

**Get your doctor's ok to begin a strength training program. START SLOWLY.**

Warm up with 5-10 minutes of stretching or gentle aerobic activity such as brisk walking. Then choose a weight or resistance level heavy enough to tire your muscles after about 12 repetitions.

To give your muscles time to recover, rest one full day between exercising each specific muscle group. When you can easily do more than 15 repetitions of a certain exercise, gradually increase the weight or resistance. Remember to stop if you feel pain. Although a mild muscle soreness is normal, sharp pain and sore or swollen joints are signs that you have overdone it.

Two to three strength training session a week for 20 to 30 minutes are sufficient for most of us.

**May is National Physical Fitness and Sports Month**

For More Information On Exercise and Health Go To:  
[www.americaonthemove](http://www.americaonthemove)

Family Medical Associates is pleased to offer our patients vitamin supplements from *Pure Encapsulations* and *ProHealth, Inc.* that are hypoallergenic and preservative free with no fillers or coatings. Both companies are compliant with the NSF Good Manufacturing Practices. NSF is an international, non-profit that focuses on public safety in food and supplements. Our supplements are also less expensive than most local retailers. Ask your primary provider about supplements today!

3500 Bush Street  
Suite 103  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27609

Phone: 919-8758150  
Fax: 919-875-9577

Our website has lots of helpful  
information about our practice.  
Visit It today:  
[www.fmaraleigh.com](http://www.fmaraleigh.com)

### Our Mission Statement

Family Medical Associates of Raleigh believes that medicine is an art, as well as a science. We are committed to delivering quality healthcare to the whole person. We partner with our patients to provide a medical home that is respectful, compassionate, accessible, and comprehensive.

## OUR SERVICES

We have many exciting changes going on in our practice that we would like to share with you.

First, if you have not yet met our newest providers, we are pleased to introduce:

Dr. Jennifer Jo  
Dr. Heather Christie  
Marci Brigode, PA  
Monika Kraus, Registered Dietitian

Dr. Drabick, Dr. Flick, Dr. Moore, and Cheryl Proctor, FNP, also continue to serve as primary providers to many of you and your family members.

We are now open until 7:30 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We are open during lunch hours except on Wednesdays, and we provide same-day and walk-in appointments every day.

We have added many services in recent years, and hope that you are aware of the comprehensive care that we offer:

- ◇ Physician-supervised weight loss, under the direction of Dr. Drabick – please visit: [www.centerformedicalweightloss.com](http://www.centerformedicalweightloss.com)
- ◇ Nutrition counseling with our registered dietitian - many BCBSNC members qualify for free visits!
- ◇ Free diabetes education classes
- ◇ Bone density testing and Boniva injections for the treatment of osteoporosis
- ◇ Gynecology services, including pap testing, colposcopies, endometriosis treatment, and contraception care, including Mirena IUD
- ◇ Cosmetic dermatology services including Botox and Juvederm
- ◇ Medical massage therapy – please visit: [www.moonshadowmassage.com](http://www.moonshadowmassage.com)
- ◇ Relief of neck and back pain using bioelectric therapy
- ◇ Full-service lab testing
- ◇ Annual, school, and sports physicals, well-child checks, and immunizations
- ◇ On-site fitness facilities and personal fitness training with a certified trainer

We have launched our new website at [www.fmaraleigh.com](http://www.fmaraleigh.com), which will soon include a secure patient portal that includes online prescription refills, appointment requests, e-visits, and much more. We are also pleased to offer services through Family Health & Wellness Center, which has its own website at [www.healthyraleigh.com](http://www.healthyraleigh.com).

While we continue to grow, our goal is to consistently provide excellent medical care to you and your family. We hope that your experience with our office is always a positive one, and we value your feedback and your referrals.

We look forward to serving you for years to come and we appreciate that you have chosen us as your family practice!

\*Please be on the lookout for our newly-launched website and secure patient portal! You will soon be able to login online to request appointments, prescriptions, pay your bills, and much more!