

## Vitamin D and Bone Health

### ***What is the problem?***

Recent evidence suggests that there is an epidemic of vitamin D deficiency in the US despite the many health benefits associated with adequate blood levels of vitamin D. We are particularly concerned about how vitamin D insufficiency is impacting bone health.

Vitamin D is critical for bone health because it helps the intestines absorb calcium – a major building block for bone. Think of vitamin D as the “key” that unlocks the full value of calcium.

Our bodies have an efficient way to manufacture vitamin D by exposing the skin to the sun (ultraviolet light). However, because of the extensive use of sunscreen to protect against skin cancer and the indoor life many of us lead, we do not have sufficient sun exposure to produce the quantities of vitamin D we need.

### ***What can you do?***

You should always try to maximize your calcium absorption, but the amount of vitamin D that individuals should take to avoid deficiency is still under scientific study. American Bone Health recommends that in general, individuals with osteoporosis or any of the risk factors for osteoporosis take a minimum of 1,000 but not more than 2,000 international units of vitamin D supplements per day to maintain optimal vitamin D sufficiency.

### ***How can you be sure?***

As always, consult your osteoporosis care provider on the amount of vitamin D that is best suited for you. In some cases, your doctor may do a blood test called “25 hydroxy vitamin D” to determine your current level of vitamin D before starting a course of treatment.

For more information on vitamin D and calcium absorption contact American Bone Health at [www.americanbonehealth.org](http://www.americanbonehealth.org).