

December 8th, 2010

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) released updated vitamin D recommendations this week. Unfortunately, their new guidelines remain far short of what may actually be needed to maintain optimum vitamin D status in most adults and children.

IOM REPORT ON VITAMIN D DISAPPOINTING, NOT UNEXPECTED

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) panel on vitamin D released their findings this week, and as expected, they were overly conservative in their recommendations. While they tripled their daily vitamin D recommendation from 200 to 600 IU per day for children and most adults and doubled their upper limit recommendation to 4000 IU per day, the new guidelines remain far short of what may actually be needed to maintain optimum vitamin D status in most adults and children.

Furthermore, the IOM made these recommendations with only bone health in mind as an important health factor, ignoring a very large body of accumulating research suggesting that significantly higher levels of vitamin D have multiple health benefits. In fact, nearly every credible scientist who studies vitamin D recommends and takes much higher levels.

The panel decided it was too early to use research showing protection against diabetes, heart disease, cancer, immune function, and muscle function, because – in their minds – the evidence was inconsistent and inconclusive.

While there is some debate on optimal vitamin D amounts, most conservative estimates suggest that blood levels of circulating vitamin D (25-hydroxyvitamin D) need to be above 30 ng/mL (75 nmol/L). USANA recently completed two studies on circulating vitamin D levels in adults. Our research showed that nearly 70% of adults supplementing with 600 IU vitamin D or less had circulating levels below this minimum threshold. Note too that the Linus Pauling Institute continues to recommend that generally healthy adults take 2,000 IU (50 mcg) of supplemental vitamin D daily.

It is unfortunate that the IOM did not reach the conclusion that vitamin D is important for more than just bone health. We continue to recommend that supplemental vitamin D in the range of 2000 to 4000 IU per day is much more appropriate for maintaining overall health.

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