

In a double-blind placebo-controlled study, researchers found that women taking a combination of calcium and vitamin D supplements had a 60 percent lower incidence of all cancers than women not taking the supplements.

Calcium and Vitamin D supplementation decreases cancer risk in postmenopausal women

A study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* has shown a reduction in cancer rates among postmenopausal women taking vitamin D combined with calcium.

This four-year, double blind, randomized placebo-controlled study involved over 1,100 postmenopausal women who were divided into three treatment groups: 1) placebo, consisting of both a vitamin D placebo and a calcium placebo; 2) calcium, consisting of either calcium citrate (1400 mg Ca/day) or calcium carbonate (1500 mg Ca/day) plus a vitamin D placebo (Ca-only group); and 3) calcium plus vitamin D, consisting of calcium plus 1000 IU (25 µg) Vitamin D3/day (Ca + D group).

In comparison to the placebo group, the women taking both calcium and vitamin D had a 60% decreased risk of all cancer by the end of the study. There was also a marginal reduction in risk among the women taking calcium only.

This study takes an important step in extending several decades of research involving the role of vitamin D in health and disease. The results further strengthen the case made by many specialists that vitamin D may be a powerful cancer preventive and that it is commonly found lacking in the general population, particularly the elderly.

Joan M Lappe et al. Vitamin D and calcium supplementation reduces cancer risk: results of a randomized trial. *Am J Clin Nutr* June 2007 vol. 85 no. 6 1586-1591.