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*Recent research has found that older adults who take vitamin D with calcium supplements may have a longer life expectancy.*

# VITAMIN D AND CALCIUM TAKEN TOGETHER REDUCE MORTALITY IN OLDER ADULTS

During the last decade, there has been growing recognition of the beneficial health effects associated with vitamin D intake. A new study published in the Endocrine Society's *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism (JCEM)* has found that vitamin D, when taken in conjunction with calcium, may reduce the mortality rate in older adults.

This study used pooled data from eight randomized controlled trials that included a total of 70,528 participants. 86.8% of these participants were female, with a median age of 70. The studies each had a follow-up period of at least three years, allowing researchers to analyze the effect of vitamin D supplementation on mortality during this three year period.

The results showed a total decrease in mortality of 7%. However, a closer look at the data revealed that vitamin D alone did not have an effect on mortality. It was observed that in order to decrease mortality, calcium had to be supplemented with vitamin D. After taking this into account, researchers found that mortality was reduced by 9%. These findings suggest the reduced mortality was not due to a lower number of fractures, but represents a beneficial effect beyond the reduced fracture risk.

While this does help increase the evidence for taking vitamin D supplements, it also provides an enlightening piece of evidence supporting calcium supplementation. The researchers conclude that calcium supplementation is not harmful to survival when it is taken in conjunction with vitamin D. Conversely, in this study calcium (when supplemented with vitamin D) appeared to have beneficial effects on general health as evidenced by the decreased mortality rate.

*Rejnmark L, et al. Vitamin D with Calcium Reduces Mortality: Patient Level Pooled Analysis of 70,528 Patients from Eight Major Vitamin D Trials. J Clin Endocrinol Metab. 2012 May 17.*