

# Munch ON THIS



## **SAD or Just Depleted?**

*By Marcia Rae  
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Calcium builds strong bones. Right? Well, almost right, but not the whole story. Calcium without sufficient Vitamin D is like no calcium at all. But that is not all Vitamin D does. Many of the body's tissues contain Vitamin D receptors, proteins that bind to vitamin D. In the intestines, the receptors capture Vitamin D, enabling efficient calcium absorption. But similar receptors are also present in many other organs, from the prostate to the heart, blood vessels, muscles, and endocrine glands. Lack of sufficient Vitamin D can result in osteoporosis, depression, heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, parathyroid problems, immune function, and weight loss.

Additionally, an area of vitamin D research is its relationship to depression. Seasonal Affective Disorder, or SAD, is a mood disorder brought on by decreasing daylight in the winter months. People in our area, where we have long winter days that are sunless, can be especially prone to SAD. Doses of vitamin D during these months have proven to be a very effective natural remedy.

We get Vitamin D in two ways – we make it using sunlight, or we eat it. The problem is that we do not seem to be able to get it either way in sufficient quantities for optimum health. In Brownsville, the sun is only strong enough between May and September to trigger the conversion. That means that even if you were to spend the recommended 15 minutes per day with your skin exposed to the sun, our winter sun is not strong enough in UVB rays for your body to manufacture its own Vitamin D.

Food sources for Vitamin D are rare and few are available from local production. Salmon and sardines (especially the bones), shrimp, vitamin-D fortified milk, cod, and eggs are excellent sources. But it is almost impossible to get enough from just foods.

If you are eating commercial eggs, the amount of D is negligible. Now that the Farmers Market is closed and our hens, for the most part, are on vacation (they prefer to do their laying when the days are longer) securing local eggs is challenging but not impossible. Eggs are available on [WillametteLocalFoods.com](http://WillametteLocalFoods.com). Even eating good eggs though would not provide enough D for good health.

Children can be especially vulnerable to low Vitamin D, since many no longer drink a glass of D fortified milk with each meal and instead have substituted sodas. Milk supplies D and calcium, needed by children to build strong bones, connective tissue and for organ function. By substituting colas, not only is the child not getting these vital nutrients, but it is thought that the phosphoric acid in the cola steals calcium from the bones.

Most likely the solution is a D supplement and doctors are routinely checking blood levels. When they find the levels to be too low they suggest a supplement appropriate to the individuals needs. But if you are not a person who has annual exams and blood tests, you are most likely low in D and unaware. While you may think that there is nothing wrong with your health, the effects are cumulative and you may suffer from diseases and conditions down the road that are D-related and preventable.

Munch on This – How's your D today?

PS – If you have eggs to sell, let me know and I will pass that information on.

PSS – See you at the Munch Night, November 5 at 6 p.m. at the Corner Café. Come and hear Jen Olsen of The Mushroomery discuss everything you always wanted to know about mushrooms. Mushrooms don't have much D, but we will nevertheless enjoy the mushroom and local food buffet. Music by Tom Janssen, Cowboy Bob, Don Andrews, and Spencer Masterson.

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