

## Vitamin Supplements and Crohn's Disease Patients

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Monday, 21 January 2008  
Last Updated Monday, 21 January 2008

Crohn's Disease is an IBD—Inflammatory Bowel Disease—that mainly affects the small intestine. It causes both chronic pain and diarrhea and is similar to ulcerative colitis, which causes ulcers in the intestinal lining. Crohn's Disease affects both men and women and can show up in children or in later adulthood. No one is quite sure what causes Crohn's Disease, but there are a variety of treatment options.

One of the main symptoms of Crohn's Disease is vitamin D deficiency, because it is not absorbed regularly into the body due to the active inflammation in the intestines. Vitamin D is necessary to help regulate the amount of calcium in the body. You normally get vitamin D through the foods that you eat and the sun, which causes you to absorb vitamin D through the skin. However, for Crohn's Disease patients, vitamin D supplement may need to be taken.

If you don't get enough vitamin D in your system, osteomalacia is the result. Osteomalacia is a condition in which your bones are weaker than they should be. In children, this can cause rickets and in all age groups, osteomalacia means that you can very easily fracture your bones. If you add vitamin D supplements to your diet and spend more time in the sun, you should be able to get the levels of vitamin D your body needs to prevent this from happening.

Vitamin D supplements are usually not classified as drugs and can therefore be purchased over the counter at a pharmacy or health food supply store. However, just because they are not technically drugs doesn't mean you shouldn't use precaution when taking these supplements. First, ask a doctor if it is safe for you to take vitamin D supplements. Because of your Crohn's Disease, you are probably taking other daily medications. Sometimes, a supplement can interact to cause side effects or decrease the potency. You should also ask your doctor how much you should be taking every day. Too much vitamin D leads to overdose or vitamin poisoning, which can lead to problems with your kidneys and liver. It is best to only take the recommended amount.

Crohn's Disease may be a difficult medical condition with which to live, but little things like vitamin D supplements can make life easier. Talk to your doctor today to learn how to make vitamin D supplements a part of your daily life routine to help battle Crohn's Disease.

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