



BONE DENSITY & OSTEOPOROSIS: An Update for Manitoba Physicians

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“Vitamin D Testing and Replacement”

Vitamin D supplementation

Virtually all Canadians are affected by suboptimal vitamin D status due to our northern latitude and lack of good nutritional sources. As a result, Health Canada now recommends vitamin D supplementation for all men and women over age 50. Those under 50 are also likely to have suboptimal vitamin D status, especially during winter months, and may choose to take supplements as well. The suggested dose of vitamin D for adults is a minimum of 400 IU, although the strongest evidence is for doses of at least 800 IU. Daily doses up to 2000 IU are safe and do not require serologic monitoring.

The Canadian Pediatric Society recommends a vitamin D intake of 400 IU/d, with an increase to 800 IU/d for babies north of the 55th parallel.

Who needs testing?

Serologic testing of 25-OH-vitamin D SHOULD be considered in the following situations:

1. Individuals starting pharmacologic therapy for documented osteoporosis. Measurement of serum 25-OH-D should follow 3-4 months of an adequate supplementation dose and should not be repeated if an optimal level is achieved (≥ 75 nmol/L).
2. Individuals with recurrent fractures, bone loss despite osteoporosis treatment, or co-morbid conditions that affect vitamin D absorption or action.

Who does NOT need testing?

Individuals for whom vitamin D testing is NOT required:

Healthy adults at low risk for vitamin D deficiency (i.e., without osteoporosis or conditions affecting vitamin D absorption or action).

Should a physician feel that a patient needs a vitamin D level on an urgent basis, they may direct their request to the Clinical Biochemist on call (reachable via any hospital switchboard/paging operator or directly via paging number 931-5253).

This newsletter and other program information are available through the Manitoba Health web site (<http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/programs/mbd>).