



EXPOSED: Big pharma's cancer cover-up

How mainstream treatments for chronic diseases up your tumor risk And the natural, life-saving solutions you can turn to instead

In recent months, there's been a lot of attention surrounding this major new study finding: Having a chronic disease can raise your risk of dying from cancer by as much as 70 percent.

The study also showed that having chronic conditions like heart, kidney and lung disease, diabetes, and even gout, can raise your chances of getting cancer as much as or more than heavy smoking, lack of exercise, insufficient diet, alcohol abuse, and obesity.

Mainstream medicine seems to have been shocked by this research. But if you really understand the science, these findings shouldn't really be news—let alone big news.

However, there *is* a newsworthy factor that researchers and mainstream medicine completely missed—and one that big pharma doesn't want you to know. Even though it could save your life...

I'll share this vital information with you in just a moment.

But first, let's look more closely at the study details... and the scientific reason why the so-called "major" findings aren't surprising for those of us who use natural approaches for disease treatment, prevention, and reversal.

Study examines link to shortened lifespans

Taiwanese researchers followed nearly 406,000 people over nine years, tracking the study participants' markers for arthritis, heart disease (blood pressure, heart rate,

cholesterol), diabetes (blood sugar), gout, and kidney and lung disease.¹ The researchers also recorded deaths due to bladder, colon, kidney, liver, stomach, and oral cancers.

The researchers found that having these eight chronic medical conditions and markers was associated with a 12 to 70 percent increased risk of dying from cancer.

What's more, having these conditions contributed to 21 percent of all new cancer cases and 39 percent of all cancer deaths.

And higher chronic disease scores were associated with marked reductions in longevity. Women were found to have shorter life spans by more than 13 years, and men were found to have a whopping 16 years cut from their lives.

Three reasons why this study offers nothing new

Here's why I'm not in awe of these findings, unlike the media and some other doctors.

1.) Competing risks. Chronic diseases like dementia, diabetes, heart disease, and cancer all have the same lifestyle risk factors the study researchers cited—especially obesity, poor diet, and lack of exercise.

In fact, biostatisticians and epidemiologists have known for years that common chronic diseases share common risk factors. This concept is called "competing risks."

For example, cancer researchers

found that people who most likely would've eventually developed cancer, instead died first from (the even more common) heart disease. So, basically, they had the shared risk factors for *both* diseases, but developed heart disease before they could get cancer.

2.) Questionable "lifestyle factors."

When it comes to risk factors for cancer, there are many more than those cited in the study, or by our government.

For example, as I wrote in a January *Daily Dispatch* ("Birth control pills increase breast cancer risk by startling percentage"), the government has largely ignored the role of hormonal and reproductive factors and birth control drugs in raising the risk of breast cancer. (To revisit this, simply enter the article title into the search bar on www.DrMicozzi.com.)

And as I've often noted, when it comes to lung cancer, the government has ignored virtually all of the other environmental and genetic factors that

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influence risk for the past 35 years or so. Instead, it has focused exclusively on smoking, leaving doctors and tens of thousands of patients high and dry regarding other prevention and treatment strategies. (For more about lung health, see page 3.)

3.) Inability to see the big picture.

As I've often pointed out, the mainstream tends to divide the healthcare world into "silos" of prevention vs. treatment, and treats each disease specifically and individually. The theory is that each medical condition requires a different drug(s) for treating it, not to mention a different drug(s) for preventing it.

However, in the world of natural approaches, science shows that a nutrient or botanical remedy effective for one aspect of health is also good for many aspects of health. Furthermore, since natural remedies address the *causes* of diseases, science has found that more often than not, the same nutrient or botanical that prevents a disease can also help to *reverse* it.

That's why natural approaches have been shown to both prevent and reverse chronic diseases like dementia, diabetes, and heart disease. And the same approaches are panning out for cancer as well—in direct conflict with the mainstream's "one disease/one drug" approach to treatment and prevention.

Which leads me to the key factor the researchers *should* have focused on...

How drugs prescribed for chronic diseases actually increase cancer risk

Nowhere in this study did the researchers suggest another common risk factor that occurs with having chronic diseases. I'm talking about all of their drug treatments.

As I mentioned before, the long arm of big pharma has reached out to ensure that nobody with a chronic

disease, or even a supposed risk factor for a chronic disease, goes without the "benefits" of its multiple medical ministrations.

But the hidden truth is, these drugs can actually be cancer risk factors *themselves*. Let me explain...

Since drugs rarely address the causes of a chronic disease—let alone cure it—patients often come to terms with the fact that they'll have to take these drugs for the rest of their lives. A sort of "life sentence," if you will. And eventually, they'll take them long enough that those competing risks I mentioned earlier will lead to cancer.

For example, if a drug for heart disease actually *does* put off dying from the disease ("managing" the condition), the patient will have more time to come down with cancer.

But, to make matters worse, many of these drugs themselves contribute to increased cancer risk.

Take statins, for example. These drugs—intended to lower the imaginary "risk factor" of cholesterol—have been shown to increase the risk of cataracts, dementia, diabetes, kidney disease muscular disorders, and more. And yet, early studies didn't reveal some of these risks, as the studies weren't conducted long enough to track the development of these chronic diseases over time. (The FDA observed just long enough to ensure they produced their desired results—a reduction in cholesterol—before rushing to approve them...)

Cancer takes the longest of all to develop—and it's now been suggested by many in the alternative health world that statins can *cause* cancer, which makes absolute sense. We know that statins deplete coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10), which is critical for cellular metabolism and is a recognized natural treatment for the complications of cancer. Taking this into account, it would be no surprise to learn that

these largely useless drugs may contribute to cancer as well.

Another important point to keep in mind is that statins are just some of the many drugs that are metabolic disrupters. And metabolic disruption is a key factor in cancer (as I reported in my January issue, which you can view on www.DrMicozzi.com).

Which came first—the cancer or the drug?

So here's the key question: Do chronic diseases also increase cancer deaths *because* of the drugs that are almost universally used to “manage” these diseases? We'll never know from this new study alone, as the researchers didn't answer—or even ask—this very obvious question.

But what *has* been clear is that you can markedly reduce your risk of cancer with lifestyle modifications *regardless* of what other chronic conditions you may have.

Even better, these changes are fairly simple and include building healthy habits like eating a balanced diet, engaging in regular physical activity, and taking supplements like vitamins B and D (which studies have shown to reduce cancer risk).

To learn all about the many natural approaches you can take (as well as

Cancer treatments that kill

Sir Francis Bacon, the 16th-century philosopher and scientist, once commented: “The remedy is worse than the disease.” That can certainly be true with conventional cancer treatments. Chemotherapy and radiation have been linked to untreatable second and third cancers, along with fatal heart disease.

When I was in medical training in Philadelphia, researchers had discovered a “miracle” cancer treatment, Adriamycin, from a marine organism naturally found in the Adriatic Ocean. My next-door neighbor and retired firefighter, Frank Squadrito, had been diagnosed with lymphoma and then successfully treated with Adriamycin.

Unfortunately, soon after treatment, Frank came down with Adriamycin-induced heart failure. The doctors prescribed digitalis (derived from the foxglove plant) for that condition, but it couldn't keep Frank alive—even though the Adriamycin had cured his cancer. Which brings to mind the old gallows-humor adage: *The treatment was a success, but the patient died.*

Doctors understood the risks of Adriamycin and balanced them against treating a rapidly fatal cancer. But this shouldn't be the case, especially when it comes to breast cancer, which typically spreads so slowly that women


(especially older women) can often live 20 years or longer before the cancer makes a comeback.

Other breast cancer treatments, such as HER-2 therapies, can weaken the heart muscle, bringing on heart failure. Chemo drugs such as doxorubicin, anthracycline, and antimetabolites can also damage the heart and lead to death. And the same goes for radiation treatments.

My poor grandmother was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1977 (at age 76) and was treated only with radiation. The cancer appeared to be cured, but the radiation caused damage to her heart and lungs, which proved fatal to her 6 years later in 1983. I suspect she was one of many women whose breast tissue findings were labeled as “cancer,” but would have never spread or killed her. Patients shouldn't be subject to chemical cancer treatments and radiation right off the bat.

The lesson? If you're diagnosed with any type of cancer, make sure to discuss with your doctor as to whether chemical treatments are 100 percent necessary. If they are, protect yourself against the complication of heart disease by with the actionable advice in Unit 8 of my *Authentic Anti-Cancer Protocol* (details are included below).

what to avoid) to prevent, treat, and reverse cancer, refer to my *Authentic Anti-Cancer Protocol*. To learn more

about this online learning tool, or to enroll today, call **1-866-747-9421** and ask for order code **EOV3U502**. 

Reverse lung disease by filling your plate

Plus—the popular recommendations you should ignore to breathe a little easier

In recent years, big pharma has been making a killing pushing dangerous drugs to treat deadly lung diseases.

And that means mainstream medicine has hardly been waiting with “bated breath,” so to speak, for research into natural ways to prevent diseases like asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which includes chronic

emphysema and bronchitis.

Even integrative medicine's so-called “natural know-it-alls” have virtually nothing to say about alternative approaches to protecting your lungs.

This is a *huge* omission considering that lung disease is the No. 3 killer of Americans today—behind only heart disease and cancer.¹

And lung cancer by far remains the top cause of all cancer deaths—killing more Americans per year than colon, breast, and prostate cancers *combined*.²

What the government doesn't want you to know about lung disease

Of course, it's not just research on

natural approaches to lung health that's being ignored.

All research on the causes, prevention, and treatment of lung diseases has been effectively discouraged by the U.S. government—ever since the National Cancer Institute made its politically motivated decision to pursue smoking prevention and cessation as the end-all and be-all of lung disease... for *everyone*.

I've written many times before about how this philosophy is flat-out wrong, with devastating consequences for patients and medical practice in the U.S. (You can read more in my archives by searching "smoking cessation" in the search bar on my website, www.DrMicozzi.com.)

But that all changes beginning right here, right now.

Two new studies have found that eating fruits and vegetables containing carotenoids can help improve lung health and function, and even *prevent* lung cancer.

Amazingly, this new research shows that a healthy diet can help alleviate—and even *reverse*—smoke-related effects on the lungs.

Meanwhile, several recent studies show that antioxidants, like carotenoids and vitamins C and E, can also substantially lower your lung cancer risk.

Let's take a closer look...

Two tomatoes a day keeps the doctor away

In the first study, researchers with Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore assessed diet and lung function in more than 650 adults in 2002. Then, they measured the study participants' lung function 10 years later.³

The lung function tests tracked how much air a person can exhale in one second and inhale over six seconds. Other factors such as age, height,

weight, gender, physical activity, and socioeconomic status were taken into account in determining the association between diet and lung function.

The researchers found that adults who ate more than two servings of tomatoes a day had better lung function and a slower rate of decline in lung function, which begins to happen normally after age 30.

Among former smokers, the effect was even stronger, suggesting that this dietary factor helped repair *all* damage done by tobacco to the lungs.

So, why tomatoes? A second new study on lung cancer may hold the key.

Carotenoid-rich fruits and vegetables lower lung cancer risk

In this study, Canadian researchers examined the roles of the carotenoids beta-carotene, beta-cryptoxanthin, lutein, zeaxanthin, and lycopene, as well as vitamin C, in the development of lung cancer.⁴

The researchers obtained dietary information from 1,105 people with lung cancer and 1,449 people without cancer. They looked at how often all of the study participants ate 49 different fruits and vegetables for two years prior to diagnosis. And they assessed potential confounding factors like age, weight, and physical activity, along with smoking history.

Researchers found that the study participants with higher beta-carotene levels (from foods) had an average lung cancer risk reduction of 34 percent. Beta-carotene is found in foods like carrots, sweet potatoes, squash, leafy green vegetables, cantaloupe, and—as we saw in the first study—tomatoes.

Participants with higher beta-cryptoxanthin consumption had an average lung cancer risk reduction of 35 percent. Foods rich in this carotenoid include red peppers, pumpkins, squash, and tangerines.

Finally, the participants who had higher lycopene levels had a 25 percent lower risk of lung cancer. As I first discovered in the mid-1980s, tomatoes are a top source of lycopene, along with watermelon and grapefruit.

Meanwhile, higher vitamin C, which is found in all of the foods mentioned above, reduced lung cancer risk by 26 percent.

All of the carotenoids studied showed a protective effect in men who were heavy smokers. And higher vitamin C also showed a protective effect in women who were heavy smokers.

Of course, the U.S. government's one-size-fits-all, blanket approach to health ignores this and other research disparities between the sexes.

Even though our own analysis at the National Cancer Institute 25 years ago revealed this important difference. (To learn more, check out "The real war on women's health" in the May 2017 issue of *Insiders' Cures*. You can access this by logging into my website.)

Antioxidant vitamins join carotenoids in promoting lung health

Meanwhile, half a dozen other studies show vitamin E and vitamin A (which should also be absorbed through your diet, as many carotenoids only convert to A in the body) help prevent lung cancer.

A new study on vitamin E looked at six decades of research and found that subjects with the highest levels of E intake, on average, had 16 percent less lung cancer risk compared to those with the lowest vitamin levels.⁵

Plus, for every 2 mg-per-day increase in vitamin E intake, the risk of lung cancer decreased by 5 percent. Just a 2 mg increase sounds miniscule but is *key* for lung health.

Vitamins E and C and carotenoids

are all antioxidants, so it makes sense that they would all contribute to lung health and lower the risk of lung diseases, including cancer. (For my recommended dosages, refer to the 4-step plan outlined in the sidebar.)

Science supports a simple, drug-free approach to lung health

The findings in these new studies clearly show there's *much* more to lung health than what mainstream has told us.

In fact, the authors of the Canadian study wrote: "Other modifiable risk factors must be identified so that all possible lung cancer prevention strategies can be implemented."

They added: "The multifactorial etiology of lung cancer suggests that factors other than smoking, such as diet, can influence its occurrence."

At last! Of course, whether the U.S. mainstream finally embraces these findings that carotenoid- and antioxidant-rich foods lower the risk of lung diseases (as well as vision problems, which I discuss below) all

My 4-step plan for healthier lungs

The latest research shows that these four simple steps can effectively prevent and treat lung cancer and lung diseases such as asthma and COPD (including emphysema and chronic bronchitis):

1. Eat seven to eight servings of fresh fruits and vegetables per day—especially carotenoid-rich produce such as carrots, sweet potatoes, red peppers, leafy green vegetables, squash, pumpkin, cantaloupe, watermelon, grapefruit, and tangerines.
2. Incorporate organic, fresh tomatoes

into your weekly meal plans, year-round.


3. If you're a smoker or former smoker, make sure to ask your doctor to annually order a low-dose computed tomography (LDCT) screening. It's an excellent way to detect lung cancer at the earliest stages possible, when it's still curable.
4. Supplement daily with
 - **Vitamin C**—250 mg, twice daily
 - **Vitamin E**—200 mg
 - **Lycopene**—10 to 12 mg (avoid synthetic beta-carotene, which has been linked to lung cancer.)

remains to be seen.

For example, American interest in lycopene has mostly focused on prostate health—not lung health.

But overall, these new studies reinforce the common-sense recommendation to eat more fruits and vegetables and avoid processed foods. (And don't let doctors warn you away from eating fresh fruit if

you have diabetes or are at risk of developing it. Fructose, the natural sugar as present in fruits, doesn't affect metabolism the same way as processed sugars do.)

So there you have it! Just a few simple diet modifications and you can breathe easier about your lung health—even if you're a smoker or ex-smoker. 

Forget those eyeglasses!

7 easy, natural ways to reduce your risk of macular degeneration, cataracts, and other age-related vision problems

Last month, I reported on all of the natural and effective options to preserve your hearing as you age—and in turn, improve your longevity.

As I was writing that article, I was struck by the similarities to the natural approaches shown to preserve vision and prevent age-related issues like macular degeneration and cataracts.

Part of the reason we don't see and hear more, so to speak, about these natural ways of safeguarding hearing and vision has to do—not surprisingly—with mainstream medicine's reliance on high-tech drugs

and devices for eye and ear health.

The highly technical medical subspecialties of ENT (ear, nose, and throat) and ophthalmology are dominated by new technologies—and natural approaches are the furthest thing from these doctors' minds.

This is in contrast to more holistic fields of medical practice—like internal medicine and family practice—that try to look at the *whole* patient, rather than just *individual* organs or symptoms.

But make no mistake, nutrients and

other natural approaches are just as important for your eyes and ears as they are for your overall health.

My 7 simple steps for healthier eyes

The eyes are amazing—and complex—sensory organs. Despite their intricate makeup, keeping them healthy can actually be quite simple.

In fact, there are seven easy steps you can take—starting today—to help prevent the onset of serious eye problems such as cataracts, glaucoma, macular degeneration, and

retinopathy.

Step 1: Get moving in the great outdoors

Make sure to head outside for a daily walk or get some light-to-moderate physical activity every day—like housework, gardening, or swimming.

Exercise can prove to be not only simple and enjoyable, but can also help protect you against high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, and type II diabetes—all risk factors for eye-related diseases.

Step 2: Shade your eyes

As you know, the sun generates a lot of radiation, some of which is potentially harmful in excess. The ozone layer of the atmosphere blocks most of it—but not all. Some ultraviolet rays still penetrate the clouds and reflect off rocks, snow, sand, and water. And these rays can damage your eyes, eventually causing cataracts.

So choose sunglasses that block 99 percent of UVA and UVB, two types of ultraviolet light. For added extra protection and shade for your eyes, wear a cap with a visor or a brimmed hat, which work well for blocking direct ultraviolet rays.

Step 3: Soak up the sun

While it's vital to protect your eyes, you don't want to block the rest of your body from receiving sunlight.

Your skin needs exposure to UVB light to activate vitamin D production in the body. And the more vitamin D in your bloodstream, the less risk of the cardiovascular diseases and diabetes that can harm your eyes. (See page 7 for more on the natural benefits of vitamin D.)

Researchers believe other sunlight wavelengths play an important role for the pineal gland (an endocrine organ in the brain) and circadian rhythm (commonly referred to as your “body clock”)—both of which help you sleep soundly. Lack of sleep is also

associated with heart disease, diabetes, and other chronic health conditions.

Step 4: Curb your sweet tooth

While a few extra pounds tend to be all right for your health, obesity can increase inflammation and raise the risk of high blood pressure, heart and vascular diseases, and type II diabetes.

High blood sugar, in particular, contributes to cataracts and damages small blood vessels that supply the retina.

Eventually, it can lead to diabetic retinopathy—a condition where blood vessels in the tissue of the retina, or back of the eye, become damaged. This condition can produce symptoms that include floaters, blurriness, dark areas of vision, difficulty perceiving colors, and even blindness.

To avoid this condition, keep your blood sugar balanced. That means avoiding sugar and processed, refined carbs. And be sure to use generous amounts of spices like cinnamon and curcumin (turmeric), both of which have been shown in study upon study to help promote optimal blood sugar support.

Ask your doctor to closely monitor your hemoglobin A1C levels to find out if you're at risk for type II diabetes. If you're diagnosed with diabetes and your doctor *insists* on prescribing a drug, the only safe and effective drug to take is metformin. Originally derived from the European folk remedy French lilac, metformin helps prevent the eye complications of type II diabetes.

For more all-natural approaches to lowering blood sugar and preventing (and even reversing) diabetes, refer to my new *Integrative Protocol for Defeating Diabetes*. To learn more about this online course, or to enroll today, simply call **1-866-747-9421** and ask for order code **EOV3U503**.

Step 5: Stay hydrated

Overall, it's important to stay hydrated to prevent the eye and lens

from drying out. But that doesn't mean you have to drown yourself in glass after glass of water every day...

For decades now, coffee has been given a bad rap by misguided “experts,” due in part to its supposed dehydrating effects. But research shows you can drink up to six cups of coffee a day without getting dehydrated.¹

In general, studies link drinking three to four cups of coffee per day with a host of health benefits. These include, but are not limited to: lowering your risk of diabetes, protecting your liver, staving off depression, and dramatically reducing your risk of developing Parkinson's disease.

And moderate consumption of coffee gives you added eye-health benefits as it contains antioxidants that help defend against damage to the retina and the lens, where cataracts can potentially form.

When you've finished your morning coffee, you can switch over to my other favorite way to stay hydrated throughout the day: an herbal tea called aspal (also known as red bush or rooibos).

Just a cup or two per day, totaling to 400 mg daily, is enough to provide hydrating benefits at a cellular level. You can find it combined with other healthy water-soluble powdered extracts such as blueberry, baobab and rose hips.

Step 6: Eat the colors of the rainbow

I always recommend protecting your vision by following a balanced diet with plenty of fruits, vegetables, and fish. And new research shows that these foods can specifically lower risk of macular degeneration.³

Follow an eye-healthy diet filled with colorful, edible plants. Rich colors in fruits and vegetables are due to pigments, which by definition interact with solar radiation, or light.

Blue, purple, and dark, ruby-red

fruits contain anthocyanins, potent antioxidants that help strengthen blood vessels—including those in the retina.

Good examples include bilberries, blueberries, blackberries, cherries, and plums.

Yellow-orange-red fruits and vegetables contain high amounts of carotenoids, which also benefit eyesight.

And don't forget the colorful orange marine carotenoid called astaxanthin, which is available in liquid form together with Vitamin D.

I helped discover the role of the carotenoids lutein and lycopene 30 years ago at the National Cancer Institute. Research shows these two nutrients support glandular tissue, as well as nerve tissue in the eye.

Carotenoid-rich food sources include: cantaloupe, carrots, dark leafy greens, grapefruit, red peppers, squash, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, and watermelon.

Eating fruits and vegetables also helps slow digestion and absorption of sugars and carbs from the diet, which helps keep your blood sugar balanced. And these nutritious foods contain many anti-inflammatory and antioxidant constituents that help keep your eyes healthy.

Overall, strive to eat seven or eight servings of colorful fruits and vegetables each day. It sounds like a lot, but really, a serving is only about a half cup.

A typical salad contains several cups of greens, along with one or two servings of other vegetables. So eating a big salad for lunch gives you more than half of your daily quota. If you have a piece of fruit for breakfast and as an afternoon snack, and a vegetable side dish with dinner, you've reached eight servings without making any extra effort.

Step 7: Stock up on vision-protecting supplements

There are several supplements with solid research supporting their vision-protecting benefits. In particular, a large clinical trial called the Age-Related Eye Disease Study pointed to higher intake of omega-3s and zinc for reducing the risk of macular degeneration.²

If you regularly eat fish, I recommend 4 to 5 grams of omega-3 fish oil per day (and 6 grams of omega-3 if you don't eat fish) that contains 1400 to 1800 mg of EPA and 1000 to 1400 mg of DHA, along with 50 to 60 mg of zinc. (I'll give you all the details on these new, updated recommendations for omega-3s in next month's issue).

Your simple, sight-saving supplement regimen


Add extra insurance to the longevity of your vision with the following nutrients that have been shown in numerous studies to help promote eye health.

- **Vitamin B9/folic acid**—250 mcg
- **Vitamin C**—250 mg, twice daily
- **Vitamin E**—200 mg
- **Lutein**—12 mg
- **Lycopene**—10 to 12 mg
- **Zeaxanthin**—10 mg
- **Astaxanthin**—4 mg

Take each of these daily whenever is convenient for you (morning or evening, with or without meals). And as with all supplement regimens, know that it can take up to two to three months before you begin to feel—and really see—the benefits.

Always take zinc in the bioavailable form (as zinc monomethionine, which is linked to an amino acid that binds minerals).

For the rest of the supplements you need to help protect your vision, refer to the sidebar above.

Following these seven simple steps every day will help you see far into the future. And as an added bonus, you'll boost your hearing and overall health as well. 

Setting the record straight on “too high” vitamin D dosages

How mainstream medicine's accusations can harm your health

When it comes to your health, springtime means your body is once again able to produce vitamin D with ease. As you may recall, for latitudes north of Atlanta (or north of LA, if you're on the west coast), the sun's ultraviolet B (UVB) rays—which your body uses to activate vitamin D production—only penetrate the earth's atmosphere from April to October.

While I recommend soaking up

the sunshine during warm weather months to allow your body to create its own D (aim for 15 to 20 minutes a day *without* sunscreen), there is one catch... Even in the spring and summer, UVB rays only reach the earth's surface between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. So that tight four-hour window is your sole opportunity to “naturally” increase your D levels.

That's the reason why it's so important to supplement with vitamin

D year-round. And, based on all the latest science, I recommend 10,000 IU of this vital vitamin every day.

Of course, mainstream medicine scoffs at this supposedly “high” level, and issues all kinds of dire warnings. But I think that's just a plot to scare people away from improving their health *naturally*.

Not to mention, it preys on the fact that most people (including many well-meaning primary care doctors)

don't understand how D is *really* measured. So let's set the record straight...

The complicated universe of supplement measurements

Unlike most other vitamins, minerals, and herbal supplements, vitamin D has been measured in IUs, or international units, rather than milligrams or micrograms.

The metric measurements indicate the relative potency of a substance, especially when dissolved in the human body, which is made up of kilograms of mostly water.

The bottom line? When you convert IU into more commonly used measurements, it's actually a very, very small amount.

What's an IU anyway?

As I mentioned earlier, vitamin D has been measured in IUs rather than in metric units. IUs don't refer to mass or volume that we can physically see or feel, as in the case with milligrams or micrograms. Instead, an IU measures the potency, or biological activity, of a compound.

If IUs were translated into the metric system, the doses would appear to be very tiny. In fact, the 10,000 IU of vitamin D I recommend per day is only 250 *micrograms*.

To put that into perspective, you often see recommendations for vitamin and herbal supplements—and even drugs—of 250 milligrams. That dose is *1,000 times bigger* than my vitamin D recommendation.

The units for measuring actual blood levels of vitamin D are also miniscule. The most common measurement is nanograms per milliliter. One nanogram equals 1 *trillionth* of a gram. And every 100 IU of vitamin D you ingest raises your blood levels by one nanogram per milliliter.

When I first started working in laboratory medicine as a clinical chemist and toxicologist (for the new

McDonnell Douglas lab using NASA technology), it wasn't even possible to measure *anything* in the blood or tissues in such small “nano” levels.

Vitamin D overdoses are virtually unheard of

It's amazing how much good the body does with such small amounts of vitamin D.

What's even *more* amazing is that sunlight actually destroys any excess vitamin D that happens to be made in the body (and is not stored by the organs). That's why you can never get too much sunlight, at least in terms of vitamin D production.

Because of these natural biological checks and balances, clinical vitamin D overdose is one of the rarest medical conditions in the world. And yet, the government wants doctors and patients to think taking any amount of vitamin D over 4,000 IU (a measly 100 *micrograms*) is “high.”

Which raises the question: Does the arbitrary IU measurement—rather than the more common metric measurement—contribute to the medical myth of vitamin D “overdose” and toxicity? I certainly think so...

How this vitamin overpowers prescription drugs

Even when you look at it from the mainstream medicine perspective, the fixation with “high” doses of D doesn't make sense.

When it comes to prescription medications, pharmacologists use what's known as a therapeutic index to determine the relative safety of a drug. This index is the toxic dose of a drug divided by the therapeutic dose.

For instance, digitalis, a drug for the heart, has a therapeutic index of only 2 or 3. That is, taking just two or three times the therapeutic dose can make you sick—or even *kill* you (as was the case with my late neighbor, as I mentioned on page 3). You can just imagine how many other drugs have

an even scarier therapeutic index.

So what's the therapeutic index of vitamin D?

For bone disease, it's at least 300. That is, the dose needed to cause *any* toxicity is 300 times more than the dose effective for preventing or treating bone disease.


For preventing and reversing chronic diseases like heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and Alzheimer's, just to name a few, vitamin D's therapeutic index is at least 20. That's quite a good margin of safety for vitamin D in comparison to most drugs.

Why the concept of “high” D doses is so ridiculous

Imagine if you took 20, or even 100, times the recommended dose of a prescription or over-the-counter drug. It's very unlikely you'd survive the experience. In fact, as a medical examiner and consulting forensic pathologist, I investigated many fatal poisonings due to that very scenario.

And let's not forget to mention how the government attempts to assuage our concerns about pesticides and chemicals in our food and consumer products by referring to the concentrations in parts-per-million (ppm) or -per-billion (ppb) to make them seem quite low. (Despite the fact that these chemicals are extremely toxic, even in trace amounts.)

And yet somehow, the government-medical-industrial complex is unwilling to apply the same logic about levels of a healthy nutrient like vitamin D—even when 10,000 IU translates to less than 100 *nanograms* in a milliliter of blood.

For the time being, stick to a daily dose of 10,000 IU and enjoy time outside without worry. Look for vitamin D3 in an easy-to-use liquid form, combined with astaxanthin (which carries strong benefits for your vision, as I discuss on page 7). 

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