

Vitamin A May Increase the Risk of Hip Fractures

Study shows regular consumption of high levels of vitamin A may increase the risk of hip fractures in women.

In a 2002 study, Harvard researchers found that regular consumption of high levels of Vitamin A may dramatically increase the risk of hip fractures in older, postmenopausal women.

Researchers looked at information collected over 18-years on 77,337 postmenopausal women in the Nurses' Health Study. Vitamin A intake was collected from multiple food surveys completed by the study participants. Total Vitamin A levels were calculated from whole food products, fortified foods and supplements. The number of non-traumatic hip fractures that occurred over the 18-years was then compared to vitamin A intake-levels among the subjects.

The scientists found that women who regularly consumed a total ≥ 3000 micrograms daily of Vitamin A had almost 1.5 times the risk of hip fractures as compared to women consuming the lowest levels (< 1250 micrograms).

Vitamin A is a family of dietary compounds essential for vision, growth, reproduction, and other functions. Retinol, the most common form, is found in few foods including liver, eggs, certain oils, and whole-milk dairy products. Retinol is also the form found in fortified-cereals, meal-replacement beverages and other fortified foods. Carotenoids, like beta-carotene, found in many fruits and vegetables can be converted to vitamin A in the body.

The RDA for Vitamin A for women is 700 micrograms and for men is 800 micrograms. The safe upper limit to avoid toxicity is 3,000 micrograms daily.

The findings show that regular intake of excessive Vitamin A may increase the risk of hip fractures in women, and the scientists suggest a potential reevaluation of the amounts of retinol found in fortified foods and supplements.

References:

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