

MEDIA RELEASE  
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## VITAMIN D EFFECTIVE FOR BONE DENSITY

New Zealand women could benefit from taking Vitamin D and calcium to boost bone density and avoid frailty post menopause.

Combined supplements of Vitamin D and calcium are effective for increasing the bone mineral density of post-menopausal women, even when calcium intakes are adequate says a new study from Finland.

The bone mineral density of post menopausal women increased significantly more when they received daily doses of 800 International Units of Vitamin D and 1,000 milligrams of calcium for three years, compared with women who received no intervention.

Osteoporosis is a major New Zealand health issue. It affects more than half of women (56%) and nearly a third (29%) of men over the age of 60 years.

Dr Pamela von Hurst PhD, a Vitamin D research specialist from Massey University says the combination of Vitamin D and calcium has long been recommended to reduce the risk of bone fracture for older people, particularly those at risk of or suffering from osteoporosis.

“Nutrition, physical activity and sun exposure can substantially influence the gain of bone mass and we recommend people ensure an adequate calcium intake and supply of Vitamin D through sun exposure or supplementation.

“But it should be stressed that by the time we’re post menopausal it’s actually too late to change bone density and young women should follow these recommendations,” says Dr von Hurst.

The dual action of the nutrients is complimentary with calcium supporting bone formation and repair while Vitamin D helps the body absorb calcium. An analysis published in the British Medical Journal (2010; 340:b5463 Published online, doi:10.1136/bmj.b5463) from a study of 70,000 people found that the vitamin-mineral combination significantly reduced fractures by 8% and hip fractures by 16%.

(The strength lies in the combination).

Michelle Palmer, Executive Director of Natural Products New Zealand says that taking supplements can assist with ensuring our bones are the strongest they can be when heading into menopause.

“Women need to give special attention to their calcium and vitamin D levels to ensure healthy bones post menopause. Inadequate intake of these nutrients before the onset of menopause can lead to lower bone density and brittle bones and the strength lies in the combination of the two nutrients working together. Even those women eating a balanced healthy diet may need extra supplementation going into the menopausal years.”



Source: *Osteoporosis International*

2010, Volume 21, Issue 12, Pages 2047-2055 – “Effect of calcium and Vitamin D supplementation on bone mineral density in women aged 65-71 years: a 3 year randomised population-based trial (OSTPRE-FPS)”

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*Note: Natural Products New Zealand (NPNZ) represents over 80% of the Natural Products industry. Based on a survey of wholesale and retail sales information, export data and industry surveys, NPNZ's members make up the overwhelming majority of the natural products industry in terms of product lines, turnover, employment and exports.*

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