

[IMAGE]

The Consequences of Zinc Deficiency

By James P. Meschino, DC, MS

How important is zinc when it comes to your health? A recent study underscores the importance of zinc supplementation, especially as we get older, as an important means to help prevent cancer, support immune function, and control inflammation associated with many health problems, including cancer, heart disease, autoimmune disease and diabetes.

Previous studies by the same researchers showed that, in both animal and human studies, zinc deficiency can cause DNA damage linked to cancer risk. The latest study suggests that zinc deficiency also leads to systemic inflammation. In addition, immune-system cells are also particularly vulnerable to zinc deficiencies, and zinc is essential to protect against oxidative stress and help repair DNA damage.

Studies show that approximately 40 percent of elderly Americans have diets that are deficient in zinc. The elderly are the fastest growing population in the U.S. and are highly vulnerable to zinc deficiency, as they don't consume enough of this nutrient and don't absorb it very well.

In zinc deficiency, the risk of which has been shown to increase with age, the body's ability to repair genetic damage is decreasing even as the amount of damage is going up. The combination of these two factors contributes strongly to the risk of cancer. Moreover, the excess inflammation that results from suboptimal zinc status is associated with most degenerative diseases, including cancer, arthritis, Alzheimer's disease and heart disease.

Zinc Deficiency - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark Experts including the co-author of the most recent study recommend that all seniors take a supplement that contains the full RDA for zinc, as zinc is important throughout all of adult life to support immune function, taste bud function, wound healing, antioxidant defenses, eye health, and prevention of cancer and inflammatory states.

Keep in mind that zinc intake above 40 milligrams per day should be avoided because it can interfere with absorption of other necessary nutrients, including iron and copper. High levels of supplementation are also linked to increased risk of genito-urinary tract conditions. As always, talk to your doctor of chiropractic before supplementing with zinc or any other vitamin / mineral.

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