

[IMAGE]

## Vitamin D for the Pancreas

By Editorial Staff

People don't think about their pancreas much until something goes wrong, and unfortunately, by then it's often too late. Pancreatic cancer is among the most deadly, with a five-year survival rate of only 10 percent once diagnosed. But even people with a perfectly healthy pancreas generally don't know much about it – what it does or how to help keep it functioning properly.

Let's start with what it does. The pancreas is a pear-shaped abdominal gland on the right side of the body. It aids in digestion and blood sugar regulation, among other functions.

Sometimes, the pancreas can get inflamed (pancreatitis), but pancreatic cancer is the most worrisome because symptoms rarely appear until the cancer has spread, which accounts for the high death rate from the disease.

Now let's talk about vitamin D and why it's so important for pancreatic health. Research suggests "the sunshine vitamin," which many know primarily for its value in bone health, has wide-ranging beneficial health effects, one of which is in helping prevent not only pancreatic cancer, but also type 1 and type 2 diabetes. One study, published in *Critical Reviews in Food Science and Nutrition*, states:

"Data from observational studies correlated vitamin D deficiency with risk of type 1 and type 2 diabetes. Prospective and ecological studies of pancreatic cancer incidence generally support a beneficial effect of higher 25-hydroxyvitamin D concentration as well as inverse correlations between UVB dose or exposure and incidence and/or mortality rate of pancreatic cancer."

Put in layman's terms: Vitamin D in adequate amounts reduces the risk of diabetes and pancreatic cancer, while inadequate amounts may raise the risk. Your doctor can tell you more about why vitamin D is a powerful weapon not only for pancreatic health, but also for whole-body health.

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