

[IMAGE]

## The D in Vitamin D

By Editorial Staff

You might think the "D" in vitamin D stands for defense, considering all the research-supported health benefits, but don't overlook its *offensive* capability – as in the best defense is a good offense. That's because new research suggests going on the offensive by taking just one type of supplement a month – you guessed it, vitamin D – can reduce your risk of a heart attack, especially if you're an older adult.

In a study described as "the largest of its kind," involving more than 21,000 adults ages 60 and older at time of enrollment, participants were randomly assigned to receive either 60,000 IU / month of vitamin D3 (approximately 2,000 IU per day) or a placebo (inactive) supplement. Eligible participants were taking less than 500 IU of vitamin D per day. (The current daily recommended allowance – RDA – for vitamin D is 600 IU for adults ages 19-70 and 800 IU for adults over age 70, per the National Institutes of Health.)

defense - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark Researchers tracked participants to evaluate how each group fared in terms of major cardiovascular events, including myocardial infarction (heart attack), stroke and need for coronary revascularization (a procedure to restore blood flow to areas of the heart that aren't getting enough blood, generally due to heart disease).

After an average of five years taking vitamin D3 supplements or placebo, the rate of major cardiovascular events was lower in the vitamin D-supplemented group, particularly with respect to heart attack and coronary revascularization. (Stroke risk did not appear to be affected significantly by vitamin D supplementation.) While the research team states that the effect was small and more research needs to be done, their findings, published in the prestigious *British Medical Journal*, add to the growing body of evidence suggesting vitamin D is your best defense (read: *offense*) against a wide range of health issues.

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