

# Vitamin D reduces cancer risk

BY ABBEY SNYDER  
Staff Reporter

For once, it's a good thing to get a D. A recent study at Creighton University in Nebraska has shown that increased levels of vitamin D can reduce the risk of certain types of cancer.

Nursing professor Joan Lappe, the principal investigator of the study, said this study is the first of its kind.

"Ours is the first randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial to see if vitamin D can lower the risk of cancer," she said. "That type of study is the gold standard."

Lappe said they tested 1,179 postmenopausal women over four years, and those taking vitamin D and calcium consumed 1,100 IUs [International Units] per day.

"At the end of four years, we found that those people who got vitamin D in addition to calcium ... had about a 60 percent lower risk of cancers of all types than the group that got the placebo," Lappe said.

The study showed that participants reduced their risk of several types of cancer, including breast and colon, because vitamin D assists in the prevention of cancerous cells, Lappe said.

"A lot of cells in our body respond to having adequate vitamin D, and some of those cells are responsible for determining what kind of cell it's going to be," Lappe said. "So you can have your colon cells become colon cells rather than cancer cells. And so it kind of prevents the development of cancer cells, and it helps to kill the cancer cells after they develop."

Local family practitioner Arthur Freeland said the skin makes vitamin D from

exposure to ultraviolet light as well as from food sources.

"Vitamin D you can get from foods that are fortified with it, specifically with fortified milk," he said.

Vitamin D is necessary because it aides in calcium absorption in bones, and problems can arise if one doesn't get enough of the vitamin, Freeland said.

"If you don't get enough vitamin D, you don't form good bones," he said. "They're weak. They're a bit rubbery. They get bendable."

Freeland said the best way to get adequate vitamin D is through small amounts of daily sun exposure.

"In general, if you get any sunlight exposure at all, even on the backs of your hands for 10 or 15 minutes in a given day, that's enough," he said.

Senior Kyle Shimmens, a health science major, said he doesn't pay particular attention to his vitamin D intake.

"I try to eat healthy, but I eat junk food just like everybody else," Shimmens said. "I eat a lot of dairy, a lot of meats, a lot of bread [and] a lot of fruits and vegetables, so I figure if I do that I get enough of my vitamin intake."

Shimmens said that because of the change in seasons, students should be paying more attention to their vitamin D intake.

"There's a lot of winter months up here

in Kirksville where you don't really get outside," he said. "It's a big concern to make sure you get out and get your sunlight enough."

Lappe said people should be getting much more vitamin D than what is now normally recommended, and specifically they should be getting vitamin D3.

"Studies in our center show that vitamin D3 lasts longer and gives you more of a higher level of circulating blood levels of vitamin D," she said. "Vitamin D3 is more potent and lasts longer, so we recommend that."

Lappe said the best way to get higher amounts of vitamin D3 is from supplements that are specifically D3 rather than multivitamins.

"You would probably have to take several multivitamins to get enough vitamin D3, and then you might be getting overdoses of some of the other vitamins that are in a multivitamin," Lappe said.

Although you can get vitamin D from some tanning booths, students should use caution, Lappe said.

"You don't need a tan to get vitamin D," she said. "And there are other risks of going to tanning booths."

Lappe said she recommends students begin considering their vitamin D intake right away.

"I do think it's good for young people to start thinking about this because ... many cancers take 20 or 30 years to develop," she said. "And if young people have adequate vitamin D throughout their lives, they may be preventing cancer completely."

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**Arthur Freeland**  
Local Family Practitioner



Jackson Groves/Index  
Maxine's Back to Nature health food store is one place where Kirksville residents can find vitamin D supplements, which studies show can reduce risk of certain types of cancer.

# All shapes can find support through new counseling services

BY KARA SAVAGE  
Staff Reporter

Maybe with the installation of Truman's new Women's Body Image Support Group, senior Jamie Weninger won't have to organize another program about body image this year.

"The group will be a great opportunity to up everyone's self-esteem, to reverse the disordered thoughts about body image and have another woman's support and perspective about how she deals and struggles with body image," Weninger said.

The new group will meet at counseling services and is intended for women who struggle with body image and who have let their bodies interfere with how they feel, said Jane Maxwell, a counselor with University Counseling Services.

"Over a course of a lifetime, the negative thoughts of body

image can really take a toll on someone and make them feel rotten about themselves, and our culture is unfortunately surrounded by the importance of appearance," said Maxwell, who will lead the body image support group.

Weninger said she and a student adviser presented a body image program on campus last year, which she said was well received by the women who attended. One part of the presentation asked students to create collages that promoted positive body image, she said.

"The media has a strong influence on the ways women perceive beauty, but I also think a lot

of it involves the way a person is brought up and who they are around," Weninger said.

Maxwell said women, especially college-aged women, are impressionable.

Women who have been in a vulnerable position and who think they need constant approval might be more susceptible to distorted body image, Maxwell said.

"Some women come from very critical families or critical peers when they were growing up, and they were highly embarrassed or alienated," Maxwell said.

He said a negative self image can lead to feelings of inad-

equacy, depression, anxiety and low self-esteem.

"The support group is designed to help people back off those kinds of feelings and make them feel good about themselves in other aspects," Maxwell said.

The group is designed for women to come together to share their own stories and to gain support from their peers, she said. Learning from peers is an important aspect of support groups because it can confirm that a person is not suffering alone.

"A lot of people compare themselves to their peers, so there is a lot of pressure to belong, especially in this age group," Maxwell said.

Another objective of the support group is to help women understand that their negative thoughts are unnecessary, she said. Maxwell said it is important to help a woman appreciate herself and realize her uniqueness.

"Women think they are too big or too thin, and they don't match up to that mysterious perfection that everyone is striving [for]," Maxwell said.

Body image can be difficult to discuss with others, she said. Maxwell said it is hard for people to admit that they have a problem, especially when this problem is personal and secretive.

Maxwell said UCS intends the group to provide support, not therapy. A support group is educational and designed for people to support one another, rather than to provide psychological care, she said.

There has been a great need for a body image support group at the University because of the wide range of women who suffer from negative body image, Maxwell said.

"Having a healthy body image and self-esteem is a very freeing feeling," Maxwell said.

Senior Sam Pounders, the

student director at the Women's Resource Center, said she thinks the support group will be successful at Truman.

"This support group will allow a new vocabulary to find a foundation on campus because there is not a service offered like this," she said.

Pounders said she hopes that the women in the support group understand that it is not the shape of their bodies but their self-image that matters.

"Body image is not when you take off your clothes and look in the mirror," Pounders said. "It is how you carry yourself."

Women's Body Image Support Group will meet from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. every Thursday at UCS. Maxwell said that although only four people have signed up for the support group so far, she encourages women to attend the meetings throughout the semester.

**"Women think ... they don't match up to that mysterious perfection that everyone is striving [for]."**

**Jane Maxwell**  
University Counselor

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To be continued ...