

Vitamin D and Friends

To be honest it is not quite correct to call it vitamin D! Its active hormonal form, calcitriol, **affects** many physiological processes. It is involved in: calcium-phosphate **homeostasis**, blood pressure regulation and immune response.

Vitamin D **deficiency** may cause health problems such as, **osteomalacia**, osteoporosis and **rickets**. One of the main causes of vitamin D deficiency is lack of exposure to sunlight. In countries where high sun protection factors are used, or large areas of the body are protected by clothing, vitamin D deficiency is a major health problem. One illness that has only **recently** been connected to a lack of vitamin D is depression. Anyone taking vitamin D **dietary supplements** should also consider their calcium **intake**.

Pharmacy customer: Good morning. Do you speak English?

PTA: Yes, I do. How may I help you?

I have a **prescription** for vitamin D.

Just one moment, please. Here you are, this is the vitamin D3 that your doctor has prescribed for you.

Thank you. How much do I have to pay?

Here is your receipt. Did your doctor say anything about calcium intake?

Yes, she did say something about keeping an eye on my calcium. Do you also have dietary supplements with calcium that you can recommend?

Yes, we have a few different types: as effervescent tablets, as chewable tablets and in powdered form. Which would you like?

I'll take the chewable tablets, please. I tried taking the **fizzy tablets** and they effected my **tummy**.

They come in two flavours: caramel and chocolate.

I'll have the chocolate-flavour please.

May I ask you a question?

Yes.

Do you take thyroxin medication?

Yes, why?

Please make sure not to take calcium at the same time as your thyroxin, it can have a negative effect on absorption of the medication. You should wait at least two hours before taking any cal-

cium in the form of tablets, in mineral water or even things like milk and dairy products.

Good to know! Anything else?

I assume that your GP did a blood test to establish your vitamin D levels. She has prescribed high dosage vitamin D3 which you should take once a week on the same day and preferably at the same time.

Yes, she said my vitamin D levels were well below the accepted level. She also said that there is a danger of something called hypocalcaemia. Do you know what it is?

Hypocalcaemia is very low levels of calcium in the blood. This may lead to osteoporosis and rickets, and calcium is also involved in nerve function, muscle contraction and relaxation, digestion, blood clotting and blood pressure regulation.

Wow! That is also good to know!

Not only is taking your vitamin D and calcium important, it is also important to get enough exercise! Nothing too strenuous just going for a brisk walk for fifteen to twenty minutes a couple of times a week can help!

I'll do that. You have been very helpful. Thank you and goodbye.

You are welcome. Bye! ■

*Catherine Croghan,
Lecturer in English and native speaker*

VOCABULARY

Affects	beeinflusst
Homeostasis	Homöostase
Deficiency	Mangel
Osteomalacia	Knochenerweichung, Osteomalazie
Rickets	Rachitis
Recently	neulich, in letzter Zeit
dietary supplements	Nahrungsergänzungsmittel
intake	Einnahme
prescription	ärztliches Rezept
receipt	Quittung, Kassenzettel
effervescent tablets	Brausetabletten
chewable tablets	Kautabletten
powdered form	Pulverform
fizzy tablets	(ugs.) Brausetabletten
tummy	(ugs.) Bauch
negative effect	negative Auswirkung
clotting	Gerinnung

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