

# Living Well Newsletter

A Holistic Approach To Bringing Health  
And Harmony Into Your Life



Winter 2014

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As nature's seasons change as they are intended, so do the seasons of our lives. With each change brings new beginnings. If you are not feeling your best as you enter a new season, please visit our wellness center to restore vital energy to your spirit and health.

## Patient Testimony on Acupuncture & Knee Pain

Thank you Dr. Lau,

Sixteen months ago I injured my left knee. An orthopedic surgeon diagnosed my problem as **osteoarthritis** with deterioration of the bone. I went to physical therapy for 4 weeks and had absolutely no change. I will not consider surgery or injections because of my history of blood clots and allergies. I am also unable to take anti-inflammatory drugs for pain. I have not had a day without pain for the past 16 months. At the age of 62 I was not willing to give up and allow this to consume my life. I decided to research alternative treatments. After consulting with my primary physician I decided to try acupuncture, I was told I had nothing to lose. Well, what I lost was the pain and discomfort. From the very first treatment there was a remarkable change. With each treatment it continued to improve. I have completed 4 out of 6 treatments. As of this moment I have absolutely no pain in my knee. I have been able to go shopping, go up and down stairs and I am able to sleep all night long without pain. I cannot explain how this works just that it does. To anyone who is leery: please, just give it a try —you will be amazed at how it will change your life. Thank you again, Beverly C.



## Common Causes of Knee Pain

Knee pain is most common in athletes, growing adolescents and elderly people. Typically, knee pain is not serious and, in many cases, may go away in time. Other causes of knee pain, however, require some type of attention. The following are some common causes of knee pain:

### Bursitis

A bursa is a sac of fluid in your joints that eases movement. However, repeated bending, injury or arthritis may lead to an inflamed bursa, which causes pain.

### Osteoarthritis



Osteoarthritis, is a painful condition that occurs when the cartilage in the knee joint, which is meant to provide a cushion between the bones, wears away, causing pain and stiffness. It may also result from overuse, an injury or wear and tear on your knee joint, such as common in athletes. If you have trouble standing, sitting, walking or limited range of motion, it is time to seek treatment.

### Tendonitis

Tendonitis is a highly common cause of knee pain in active people. In the knee, tendonitis is usually called patellar tendonitis, which refers to the patellar tendon that stretches over the knee. The tendon becomes inflamed and irritated when overused or when it endures repeated pressure and stress. Also called "jumper's knee," this condition is common in athletes like basketball and volleyball players, as well as runners, hurdlers, long jumpers and jump ropers.



Other common causes of knee pain include sprains, infection, gout, rheumatoid arthritis, ruptured ligaments, or torn cartilage.

## Acupuncture and knee pain

An overwhelming amount of research has been done to support the efficacy of acupuncture in general and for knee pain in specific. In our clinical practice we have had many positive responses in patients with knee pain of many different causes.

The conditions generally responsive to acupuncture include: knee osteoarthritis, bursitis, tendonitis, strains, local contusions, inflammation, limited range of motion as well as hamstring and quadriceps strains.

## How does acupuncture work?

Much of Western medicine still does not grasp how acupuncture relieves pain. To put it simply, it appears that the local effect of putting a needle through the skin serves to improve local blood flow to an area that may have relative ischemia (a lack of blood flow), that then benefits greatly from a local improvement in circulation. This is particularly true for conditions that involve strain and swelling.

With the addition of electrical stimulation, which is frequently used in conjunction with acupuncture, there is proof of local production of beta endorphins, the body's natural pain killing and pain modulating substance. It appears that acupuncture provides pain relief by activating the pain modulation system of the body, and changes both the processing as well as the awareness of the painful information at various levels in the central nervous system. By modulating pain, decreasing the awareness of the incoming pain signals, improving blood flow, improving the production of pain relieving substances, and in general promoting healing in the area of trauma, acupuncture helps to generate improved blood flow resulting in improved healing to the area.

In our clinical practice we have found that acupuncture serves as an excellent companion to conventional medical care for many knee conditions.

**The beauty of acupuncture is the versatility of treatment that can vary greatly from patient to patient and can be effective for a wide range of conditions.**

### *Sources:*

<http://www.kneeguru.co.uk/KNEEnotes/specialist-commentaries/dr-miriam-griggs/2005/acupuncture-knees>

<http://orthopedics.answers.com/knee/common-causes-of-knee-pain>

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/knee-bursitis/basics/definition>

# Why Do You Need Vitamin D?

For over 30 years we have been hearing about research studies that prove that people are *not getting enough Vitamin D*, especially those that live north of the equator.

More and more studies are linking Vitamin D deficiency to illness and death: including Multiple Sclerosis, cancer (especially brain and colon), chronic muscle and joint pain, hypertension, type II diabetes, depression, fatigue, increased risk of cardiovascular disease, bone loss (osteoporosis), bone fractures, fibromyalgia, lowered immunity, and risk of premature death. *With all the risks of illness, why would anyone NOT want to know what their vitamin D level is?*



## Latitude and vitamin D production in the skin

The only way to know your vitamin D level is thru a *specific* blood test ordered by a physician. Many people assume just because their doctor ran some blood tests and everything came back fine that they have no vitamin deficiencies. This is not true. Vitamin and mineral deficiencies must be checked by specified lab tests for that particular vitamin or mineral; just because your doctor ordered a CBC (complete blood count) or lipid panel (cholesterol), which came back fine, does NOT mean you don't have a vitamin D, or magnesium, or B12 or any other deficiency. The test must be specifically requested.

More physicians are getting on the ball and starting to routinely check vitamin D and other important nutritional levels, however, many are still behind the game as far as the effect nutrition has on the body. Don't forget, studying nutrition is not part of the curriculum for a physician to get his degree, yet they spend countless hours studying pharmaceuticals. If your doctor does not offer to test your D level, then *ask* him to. We live far north of the equator, we see very little sunshine and even in the summer months, it is not enough to give our bodies what it needs to ward off illness and deficiency symptoms. With our busy lifestyles many of us spend less and less time outdoors; children and elderly spend less time outdoors. You need a minimum of 15 minutes of unprotected (no sunscreen) sunshine several times a week to reach sufficient vitamin D levels. And if your level is already low, you need more than this to bring your levels to a sufficient value. If your level of Vitamin D is 20-30 ng/ml then your doctor may prescribe a prescription strength vitamin D supplement for a period of time and then advise you to take an over the counter supplement of D3 afterward.

## What does Vitamin D do?

The National Institute of Health (NIH) advises that Vitamin D promotes calcium absorption and is needed for bone growth; without sufficient Vitamin D bones can become thin, brittle or misshapen. Together with

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calcium, vitamin D helps protect older adults from osteoporosis. The NIH also explains that vitamin D plays a role in immunity and neuromuscular function, and reduces inflammation.

## You are at the greatest risk for vitamin D deficiency if:

**You don't consume the recommended levels of the vitamin over time.** This is likely if you follow a strict vegetarian diet, because most of the natural sources are animal-based, including fish and fish oils, egg yolks, cheese, fortified milk, and beef liver.

**Your exposure to sunlight is limited.** Because the body makes vitamin D when your skin is exposed to sunlight, you may be at risk of deficiency if you are homebound, live in northern latitudes, wear long robes or head coverings for religious reasons, or have an occupation that prevents sun exposure.

**You have darker skin.** The pigment melanin reduces the skin's ability to make vitamin D in response to sunlight exposure. Studies show that older adults with darker skin are among those with the highest risk of vitamin D deficiency.

**Your kidneys cannot convert vitamin D to its active form.** As people age their kidneys are less able to convert vitamin D to its active form, thus increasing their risk of vitamin D deficiency.

**Your digestive tract cannot adequately absorb vitamin D.** Certain medical problems, including Crohn's disease, cystic fibrosis, and celiac disease, can affect your intestine's ability to absorb vitamin D from the food you eat.

**You are obese.** Vitamin D is extracted from the blood by fat cells, altering its release into the circulation. People with a body mass index of 30 or greater often have low blood levels of vitamin D.



### How come my ancestors didn't worry about

### Vitamin D?

Simply, because our ancestors spent more time outdoors, (gardening and work related activities), because they walked many places, (rather than driving even short distances) and because they ate fresh seafood (not frozen or processed) and eggs.

### Natural Sources of Vitamin D.

The NIH states that very few foods in nature contain vitamin D. Fresh, fatty fish (salmon, tuna, mackerel) and fish liver oils are among the best sources. Small amounts are found in cheese and egg yolks. Most Americans rely on their vitamin D intake from foods that have been fortified with vitamin D, such as milk, cereal and yogurt.

## How Much Vitamin D Should I take?

The best thing to do, of course, is have your vitamin D tested so you know your level.

There are 2 forms of vitamin in D that are supplemented: cholecalciferol (vitamin D 3) and ergocalciferol (vitamin D 2). Vitamin D 3 is the natural form, the same type that is made in your skin. Vitamin D 2 is made in plankton under natural conditions. It has about half the strength of vitamin D 3, and interestingly enough, has been shown to be more toxic when it is overdosed.



Both vitamin D 3 and vitamin D 2 overdoses, however, are rare. At one time, there was some concern that too much vitamin D could be toxic, but recent research has shown that 10,000 IU per day can be taken without any toxic effects.

So exactly how much Vitamin D should you aim for each day? For all ages, the Institute of Medicine recommends getting between 600 and 800 IU per day. Dr. Oz recommends 1000 IU per day. Some Naturopathic doctors recommend 5000 IU per day, especially in winter or if you have a health problem. Be your own advocate, do your own research, consider your risk factors, and consult your physician to find out the best dose for you. But do take a Vitamin D supplement.

Sources:  
<http://www.shapesfit.com/vitamin-d-sunshine.html>  
<http://www.hjph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/vitamin-d/>

Website: [kingsacupuncture.com](http://kingsacupuncture.com)

Email: [info@wny-acupuncture.com](mailto:info@wny-acupuncture.com)



SOME DAYS  
YOU JUST  
HAVE TO  
CREATE YOUR OWN  
SUNSHINE.

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Touch seems to be as  
essential as

sunlight. ~ Diane Ackerman

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### Office Contact Information:

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(Transit Valley Plaza)  
East Amherst, NY 14051  
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### Acupuncture Hours: By appointment

M, W, Th 10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.  
Tues 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Fri 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
(Hours vary for other services)

**Dr. Herbert Lau, Lic. Acupuncturist & Certified Herbologist**  
**Mrs. Anna Lau, Office Manager**  
**Dr. Tony Buscaglia, Chiropractor**  
**Ms. Joan Patchett – Office Assistant**  
**Mrs. Amy Wang – Medical Receptionist**