

## T.O. doctor writes book on vitamin D deficiency

By Kelsey Stuart

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Fifteen minutes in the sun will no longer make the cut for vitamin D absorption.

According to Dr. Sarfraz Zaidi, a Thousand Oaks endocrinologist, more than 200 million Americans have a vitamin D deficiency and do not even know it.

Zaidi, who has been studying the deficiency for the last 10 years, has written a book on the subject, "Power of Vitamin D," that was sold to the public for the first time after his presentation at The Oaks shopping center in Thousand Oaks last month. Zaidi spoke as part of the weekly community health education seminar sponsored by Los Robles Hospital & Medical Center in Thousand Oaks.

Almost 200 people turned out to hear Zaidi talk about his belief that a proper dose of vitamin D could help prevent and treat diabetes, cancer, chronic fatigue, osteoporosis, hypertension, heart disease, asthma and other immunological diseases.

"The trouble with a vitamin D deficiency is that most people do not know what vitamin D is," said Zaidi, an assistant clinical professor of medicine at UCLA on staff at Los Robles. "Even most physicians do not have adequate knowledge about vitamin D deficiencies and the serious consequences," he said.

According to his book, vitamin D deficiency was first discovered in post-industrial Europe where physicians began to notice a new disease in children that stunted their growth, wasted their muscles and deformed their legs. They called the illness rickets.

"As we look back we realized that these children lacked adequate sunshine," Zaidi said. "They lived in inner cities and were surrounded by pollution from burning coal, which decreased sun rays from reaching Earth."

Zaidi said children were particularly affected because their bones were still developing. By 1900 approximately 80 percent of children living in Boston suffered from rickets.

"It was not until the 1930s that the link between rickets and vitamin D deficiencies was established," Zaidi said. "This led to the fortification of milk with vitamin D and when it was practiced, rickets was mostly eradicated."

Vitamin D was mostly forgotten until new studies led to the conclusion that vitamin D is not really a vitamin.

"Vitamin D is actually a hormone, a substance that is produced in one part of the body, enters the bloodstream and exerts its effects at sites different from the original site of its production," Zaidi said.

One of the misconceptions about vitamin D, he said, is that milk supplies the appropriate amount of it.

“One cup of fortified milk is only 100 international units of vitamin D, and 20 cups of milk would be recommended in order to reach a good level of vitamin D,” he said.

Zaidi also tested vitamin D levels of those who take multivitamins and calcium supplements, and again found a vitamin D deficiency.

“The root of the problem proved to be that the recommended daily value of vitamin D was outdated,” Zaidi said. “Currently the recommended daily dose of vitamin D is 200 to 600 IU; this dose was developed to prevent rickets, a bone disease in children.”

He said the majority of his patients have a vitamin D deficiency, which he discovers through a simple blood test.

“Hormone D is not a drug so there are no side effects,” Zaidi said. “Everyone is different. A recommended intake could be anywhere from 2000 IU to 12,000 IU a day.”

“This is not just a fad like vitamin C,” he said. “This cannot be solved by going to your local GNC and buying in bulk a bunch of vitamins. A hormone D deficiency is individual specific.”

Zaidi’s patients receive a full hour to two hours of consultation in their first meeting. Everyone is different, he said, and a “one size fits all approach” does not work for treating vitamin D deficiency.

Najla “Dolly” Zaidi, who is not related to the doctor, came to him five years ago with a severe case of asthma.

“(It) was so bad that I had serious asthma attacks every three to four months,” Najla Zaidi said. “I was on three different inhalers, and I would suffer from colds constantly. I had a hormone D deficiency and was told by Dr. Zaidi to take 6000 IU a day of vitamin D. It has been five years and I have not been sick nor had an attack since.”

Dr. Zaidi, originally from Pakistan, has lived in Camarillo since 1998 with his wife and daughter.

He’s also the director of the Jamila Diabetes and Endocrine Medical Center in Thousand Oaks and the author of “Take Charge of Your Diabetes,” and has published numerous articles in medical journals.

— On the Net: <http://www.doctorzaidi.com>.



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