

D+Health

A Study of Vitamin D & Health



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The D-Health Trial Newsletter

Study progress: when will we have some results?

Many of you are coming up to 3 years in the trial and are understandably eager for us to generate some results. We will not be able to analyse the data to work out whether or not vitamin D has any effect on our main outcomes (cancer and heart disease) until after all enrolled participants have completed 5-years in the trial. However, next year we plan to start analysing some secondary outcomes, such as antibiotic use, mood, pain and skin cancer.

In the meantime, our focus is on enabling as many participants as possible to stay in the trial for the full 5 years. If too many people withdraw, the results of the trial may not be accurate. **Currently approximately 90% of people who started the trial are still with us;** this is fantastic and is a great testament to the commitment of our participants. Thank you!

If you need any help to complete surveys, letters to take with you while travelling or advice about what to do if you are going to be away when your new tablets are due please give us a call on 1300 735 920.



Get to know our staff

In the next couple of newsletters we are going to introduce you to some of our staff and scientists. In this newsletter we feature **Cathy Baxter** (Project Manager) and **Jill Wood** (Participant Liaison Officer).

Cathy is our dynamo project manager. After studying science and Arts at university, Cathy honed her management skills in the hospitality industry. She then joined the population health department at the QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute, combining her management skills with her love of medical science. When she is not working she can be found in a boat either training or competing in rowing races. In her spare minutes (literally) she spends time with her 90 year-old mother, her husband or her three adult sons. We greatly appreciate the skill, dedication and humour Cathy brings to her challenging job.



Jill has been with the D-Health trial since its inception. After working in the banking industry for 30 years, Jill joined QIMR Berghofer in 2003 to work with participants in research studies. Jill is our phone expert; she has personally made or received over 16,000 phone calls and spoken to almost half of you since we launched D-Health! She enjoys life living on an island in Moreton Bay with her dog, Sasha.

Rachel Neale attends a United Nations panel meeting

6.5 days in a darkened meeting room: not a lot of vitamin D being formed!



Chief investigator, Rachel Neale, attended a meeting of the United Nations Environmental Effects Assessment Panel (EEAP) in Greece in September. The EEAP provides advice to governments about the effects of ozone depletion on the environment and human health. The ozone layer stops a lot of the sun's ultraviolet radiation from reaching earth, so destroying ozone increases the incidence of skin cancer but also enables more vitamin D production. In recognition of her extensive knowledge of both skin cancer and vitamin D, A/Prof Neale

was invited to sit on this panel, which includes over 30 scientists from about 15 different countries. The members do a lot of work during the year and then meet for a week to finalise their yearly report. The meeting is intense with very little free time, but the panel managed a half-day excursion to the stunning mountains nearby.



Half a day in the mountains: still not a lot of sunshine but fabulous views

United Kingdom recommendations regarding vitamin D supplementation

The UK Scientific Advisory Committee for Nutrition recently carefully reviewed the literature about vitamin D and health. They concluded that because the ultraviolet radiation in the UK is low, citizens should consume 400 IU of vitamin D per day all year round to avoid vitamin D deficiency. Australia has much higher ultraviolet radiation, so the recommendations here are that Australians who **receive limited sun exposure** should take 400 IU – 600 IU per day (depending on age).

Contact us



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Falls diaries

Falls are common in older people and often cause fractures or other serious injuries. About 10% of all days spent in hospital in Australians aged over 65 years are due to a fall. Vitamin D might help to prevent falls by improving muscle strength and function, but the evidence is unclear. To help us understand more about the effect of vitamin D on falls, we are asking a randomly selected group of D-Health participants to keep a 'Falls Diary' for 3 months. We will be recruiting for this over the next 6 months or so. If you receive an invitation and you have any questions please do not hesitate to give us a call.

Questions or comments? Please do not hesitate to give us a call.

Missed any of our newsletters?

You will find all our newsletters on our website (go to dhealth.qimrberghofer.edu.au and click on newsletters). If you would like to receive a copy of previous newsletters in the mail please let us know.