

# Natural Health News

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## SUNSHINE AS MEDICINE

As a culture we have been warned about sun exposure and told to always wear sunscreen which is possibly one of the reasons we now have epidemic levels of vitamin D deficiency. Vitamin D is essential to functions throughout our bodies: bones need it to maintain their strength, muscles need it to move, nerves need it to carry messages between the brain and every body part, the immune system needs it to fight off invading bacteria and viruses. There is also compelling research connecting vitamin D deficiency with many diseases, from cancer, to cardiovascular problems, to autoimmune disease. The symptoms associated with a vitamin D deficiency include: fatigue, joint pain and/or swelling, leg cramps, muscle pain or weakness, sleep interruption or insomnia, poor memory or concentration, headaches, bladder issues (urgency, frequency), bowel issues as well as low immune function. We have a chemical in our skin that converts to vitamin D when exposed to sunlight. Vitamin D is not really a vitamin at all. By definition vitamin D is a hormone because it is made in one organ (the skin), enters the bloodstream and then goes into the liver and kidney to get activated. Vitamin D is the only vitamin that is also a hormone and has become more commonly known as the sunshine vitamin. In addition to all of the physical benefits associated with vitamin D, sunshine is also essential to our mental health. How many of us have trouble getting out of bed on cloudy or rainy days, moving a little slower, feeling less alert, and even a little sad when cut off from sunlight? There is a biological reason. When sunlight hits our eyes, our brain decreases the production of melatonin (a hormone that helps us sleep) and increases the production of serotonin (a hormone connected with feelings of happiness and wakefulness). Sunlight is a direct part of our sleep/wake cycle, and when cut off from sunlight, those rhythms can get disrupted. For a day or two, we end up feeling groggy. For longer periods of time, we can become depressed. Spending time in the sun prevents this from happening. When you spend time outside, you also have the opportunity to connect with nature and you are doubling the benefits. Researchers found that both memory and attention span increased after people spent time in a natural setting. Dr. Natasha Campbell-McBride (author of *Gut and Psychology Syndrome*) lists both fresh air and sunshine among the top 10 influences that boost healthy immunity. Our modern technological lifestyles mean we are indoors most often and typically not outdoors during the prime hours of 10 AM—2 PM when the sun is most able to help us produce vitamin D. Most people would need approximately 10—20 minutes in the sun with your arms and legs exposed two to three times a week, however the estimated amount will vary based on your skin type, your age, season of the year, how much clothing you are wearing and your geographical location. The more skin is exposed to the sun, the more vitamin D your body can produce.

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### STORE HOURS:

Monday – Saturday  
9 am-5 pm  
CLOSED SUNDAYS

### SPA HOURS:

By Appointment



Happy 4th of July!

Don't wear sunscreen when you are trying to create vitamin D, because it blocks the ultraviolet light necessary for vitamin D synthesis. If you have fair skin, start with just a few minutes and work your way up to a maximum of 20 minutes daily. You don't want to burn. There is a maximum amount of vitamin D that can be created daily, and once it has been made, you can stay outside all day and your body won't make any more. If you have dark skin, it takes 1 to 2 hours to produce your daily maximum of vitamin D. Also, it takes time for the vitamin D to absorb through your skin into your bloodstream. Postpone showering for at least one hour, and when you take a shower, be aware that soap can wash away some of the vitamin D that hasn't been absorbed. Some people choose to simply rise off, instead. Skin cancer is connected to long term exposure to the sun, and to severe sunburns. Very few foods in nature contain vitamin D, making it difficult to get the needed amount of vitamin D from your diet alone. The most known sources are fatty fish such as wild caught salmon, tuna, and mackerel, fish liver oils, beef liver and egg yolks. We are designed to get our vitamin D from the sun. To give you a comparison: one 6 ounce portion of salmon will give you about 900 IU of vitamin D, whereas 10 minutes of summer sun exposure generally creates 10,000 IU of vitamin D. Sunshine is superior, so if possible, get your vitamin D naturally. However, if climate or lifestyle block your access to sunshine, vitamin D supplementation is a necessity. Most people don't get enough vitamin D. It is estimated that 42 percent of the US population has a vitamin D deficiency. Vitamin D deficiency is more common in women, people of color, obese people, senior citizens and infants. The most accurate way to measure how much vitamin D is in your body is the 25-Hydroxy vitamin D test or 25(OH)D test. Vitamin D changes into an active form of the vitamin in the kidney and be measured through a blood test (normal range: 30 to 74 ng/ml). Most recent research in the vitamin D deficiency epidemic is suggesting that levels below 50 ng/ml are now considered insufficient. As more research on vitamin D continues the recommended levels could change. Our vitamin D levels fluctuate based on sun exposure and your level will probably be highest at the end of the summer and lowest at the end of winter. Also, it is important to note that vitamin D does not work by itself in the body. There is an important relationship between vitamin D and the bioavailability of various nutrients like vitamin A and K2, calcium, magnesium, zinc, boron and others from the foods you consume in order for vitamin D to be effective. To help determine how much sun you may require for your body, there is an app called DMinder for smartphones and tablets that also help track your exposure in the sun. To assist in overall health you might want to strive to maintain a serum level of approximately 50 ng/ml of 25-Hydroxy vitamin D obtained not only from the sun but also from a combination of nutrient-dense foods and supplementation if necessary. Modern life has herded the human race indoors. One of the best things you can do for your health, is to spend some time outdoors again.

## JULY SPECIALS

Alexia Foods—Organic Corn or Peas (frozen), 12 oz.	30% OFF
Canyon Bakehouse—GF Hamburger & Hot Dog Buns	30% OFF
Late July—GF Sweet Potato Snack Chips, 5.5 oz.	30% OFF
Real Foods—Organic Corn Thins, 5.3 oz.	30% OFF
Snyder's of Hanover—GF Pretzel Sticks	30% OFF
Zoe—Organic Apple Cider Vinegar, 17 oz.	30% OFF
Glutino—GF Crispy Cookie Thins, variety, 6 oz.	25% OFF
Harvest Bay—Unrefined Virgin Coconut Oil, 14 oz.	25% OFF
Kashi—Teff Thins, variety, 4.25 oz.	25% OFF
Rhythm Superfoods—Beet Chips with Sea Salt, 1.4 oz.	25% OFF
TruRoots—Sprouted Grain & Lentil Medley, assorted	25% OFF

AND MANY MORE ITEMS!

Organic Roots  Bistro

### BUSINESS HOURS:

**MONDAY through SATURDAY 9 AM—5 PM**  
**Closed Sunday**

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO SERVING YOU!**

## **HOMEMADE NATURAL SUNSCREEN**

Combine the following ingredients in a jar:

- 10 drops lavender essential oil
- 1 TBSP. Pomegranate oil (has SPF 20)
- 3/4 cup Coconut oil (has SPF 8)
- 2 TBSP Shea butter

Place a saucepan with 2 inches of water on the stove over medium/low heat. Place jar in saucepan and stir contents until ingredients start to melt. Once all ingredients are combined, add 2 TBSP. Zinc Oxide powder and stir well. Store in a cool place.



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