

# The Changing Nature of Healthcare Series

## Nature's Miracle Products

In our modern, fast-paced society, if there is anything that we can be sure about, it is that change will always be here. This is just as true in medicine as in almost all aspects of our lives. This can be a good thing, when the changes that take place advance our overall well-being. There are, however, changes taking place that are negative to our health. In my articles, I will highlight new developments that are positive and not well known, as well as important issues that can negatively affect our health and well-being.

The dangers of acetaminophen (Tylenol): Acetaminophen is a very popular drug, a key ingredient in some 200 OTC products. What most people don't know is that acetaminophen is one of the major causes of liver failure, which leads to needing transplants, today. The American Liver Foundation recommends limiting the daily intake of acetaminophen to 3 grams. A maximum strength Tylenol tablet has 500mg, so the limit would be 6 per day. If alcohol is consumed at the same time, the effects can be even more dangerous. What people need to be aware of is that many different products such as cold remedies, have acetaminophen and they may not realize it is the same as Tylenol.

On the positive side, let's take a look at Vitamin D<sub>3</sub>. Most of us know that Vitamin D is essential for bone health and that it is created in the skin by exposure to sunlight. Vitamin D is actually a hormone that plays a key role in the production of many other hormones in the body. A simple way to appreciate what hormones do is to think of them as programs that control bodily functions. Vitamin D's primary function is to control the blood levels of calcium and phosphorous and to enhance their absorption. Calcium is stored in bones and in our muscles, including the heart. In fact, without calcium, our muscles could not function. For this reason, levels of Vitamin D can significantly affect our blood pressure. Vitamin D also plays a key role in cancer prevention. According to the Vitamin D Foundation, headed by a group of notable scientists,

*“Current research indicates vitamin D deficiency plays a role in causing seventeen varieties of cancer as well as heart disease, stroke, hypertension, autoimmune diseases, diabetes, depression, chronic pain, osteoarthritis, osteoporosis, muscle weakness, muscle wasting, birth defects, and periodontal disease.”*

According to a recent NY Times article (2/19/08), vitamin D could be considered the nutrient of the decade. Vitamin D<sub>3</sub> is the preferred form of supplementation.

Two more relatively unknown nutrients are boron and strontium. Both are critical for maintaining strong health bones. Boron has also been found to affect cognition and can reduce cholesterol levels up to 48% after less than 3 weeks of use. It also has positive effects on obesity, inflammation and reducing cancer risks. Many scientists believe that cognitive decline in the elderly is due, in part, to low levels of boron since few foods contain boron. It is also strongly indicated in people with arthritis. For example, people living in Jamaica have the highest levels of arthritis in the world and the lowest levels of boron.

Strontium is similar to Calcium and is used by the body in similar ways, making the bones and teeth much stronger. A study by the Mayo clinic showed that 84% of patients with osteoporosis given 1.7g per day reported significant pain relief while the others had moderate relief. Fish oil omega 3 fatty acids were also found to reduce inflammation as well as cause significant increases in bone mass.

Thus, proper absorption and type of calcium, magnesium, potassium, phosphorus, boron, Vitamin D<sub>3</sub>, strontium, trace minerals and vitamins together with Omega 3 FA is key to proper bone health, can prevent fractures in the elderly while improving and extending their lives and overall health.