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Health Supplements Information Service



In response to findings regarding a study with reference to high intakes of calcium and vitamin D, set to be presented at the American Society of Nutrition on May 1st, the Health Supplements Information Service (HSIS) would like to make the following comment:

Pamela Mason, spokesperson for HSIS notes: "First of all it is vital to understand that the nutrients, calcium and vitamin D are essential for the health of our bones and also the nerves and muscles in our body. This study set to be presented at the American Society of Nutrition on May 1st is **extremely preliminary** and it **would be wrong to jump to conclusions** about the influence of calcium on disorders such as Alzheimer's and also stroke. The study **did not** measure calcium intakes accurately, they were **self-reported by the subjects** and such self-reports can be **notoriously unreliable**. There is also growing evidence that low vitamin D levels, observed frequently in people – both young and old – in Britain are associated with a variety of diseases such as osteoporosis, some cancers and multiple sclerosis. We also know that almost half of adult women in the UK consume less than the Recommended Daily Amount for calcium.

Pamela adds: "People should be encouraged to consume a diet with an adequate calcium intake. However, not everyone achieves this and a supplement containing calcium and vitamin D is a beneficial and safe way to obtain these two essential nutrients. In addition, those people who are 65 years of age or more need to ensure they are consuming adequate intakes of vitamin D. Recent research¹ has shown that a reduced vitamin D status is associated with lower muscle strength in older people, which could increase the risk of falls for this population group."

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¹ Houston, D K et al (2007) Association between vitamin D status and physical performance; CHIANTI Study. J Gerontol A: Biol Sci and Med Sci 62: 440-446.