

7 in 10 U.S. Kids Have Low Vitamin D

This means an increase in Rickets, soft bones and heart disease among US children a new study has discovered. Some kids were at particularly high risk of low vitamin D levels:

- Older children
- Girls
- Mexican-American & African-American children
- Obese children
- Kids who drank milk less than once a week
- Kids who spent more than four hours a day in front of a TV screen or computer

People get vitamin D from foods like milk and fish, but it's hard to get enough from diet alone. The body makes its own vitamin D, but only when a person gets at least 10 minutes of direct sunshine a day, before putting on sunscreen.

The study noted that the widespread use of sunscreens keeps kids from getting vitamin D from sunlight. "It would be a good idea for parents to turn off the TV and send their kids outside," a researcher said. Just 15 to 20 minutes a day should be enough. And unless they burn easily, don't put sunscreen on them until they've been out in the sun for 10 minutes, so they get the good stuff but not the sun damage."

West Central Iowa Healthcare Foundation

Volume 1, Issue 2

Loss of Spouse and Divorce Has a Lasting Toll on Health

Divorce and the death of a spouse frequently have long-term negative consequences for health, even in people who remarry, new research shows.



Support from others is necessary and helpful during times of stress.

PhD, has studied the impact of divorce on heart disease.

In one study, he showed that divorced, middle-aged women -- even when they remarried -- were more likely to develop heart disease than non-divorced, married women.

It is clear that a recent divorce or widowhood is associated with an increase in poor health and depression in the near term, but the new study is one of the first to examine its effects on health years and even decades later.

They were also 23% more likely to have mobility problems, such as difficulty climbing stairs or walking short distances.

Those who were divorced or widowed but then remarried still had 12% more chronic health conditions and 19% more mobility problems than married people who had never experienced divorce or the death of a spouse; but they were only slightly more likely to report depression.

Hayward tells us that long-term stress before, during, and after a divorce may accelerate the biologic processes that lead to cardiovascular disease and possibly other chronic diseases.

Compared to married people who had never been divorced or widowed, those who had were more likely to experience long-term health problems.

Specifically: Those who were divorced or widowed were 20% more likely to have heart disease, diabetes, cancer, or another chronic condition.

University of Texas at Austin researcher Mark Hayward,

"Even when the stress goes away, this acceleration may continue as if the body has been reprogrammed," he says.

But this doesn't mean that divorce is always worse for your health than staying married, he says.

Four Healthy Habits that Will Reduce Your Risk for Disease

Don't smoke. Get off the sofa and take a walk. Stay away from the junk food. Watch your waistline. A recent study says that practicing these four habits will make you much less likely to get diseases such as cancer, diabetes, and heart disease.

After adjusting for risk factors that might influence

the development of disease, the researchers learned that those who followed all four healthy habits had a 78% lower risk of developing a chronic condition such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, or cancer compared to those who reported none of the healthy habits.

Specifically, in the study, all four of the healthy habits combined were linked to a:

- 93% lower risk of type 2 diabetes
- 81% lower risk of heart attack
- 50% lower risk of stroke
- 36% lower risk of cancer

Researchers say it's important to adopt and teach healthy habits early in life. Their findings reinforce current public health recommendations.