

## Vitamin D could prevent blindness

By Hannah Thomas on Tuesday 12 April 2011

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**You might want to stock your fridge up with milk and fish as scientists suggest that increasing your intake of vitamin D could ward off eye disease in later life and significantly lower your risk of going blind.**

A study found **women** with the highest levels of **vitamin D** were almost 66 per cent less likely to develop age-related macular degeneration (AMD), which affects about 200,000 Britons each year.

There is currently no cure for **AMD**, caused by progressive damage to the centre of the retina.

The study, carried out by **Buffalo University**, New York, examined 1,313 women and discovered that vitamin D blood levels and consumption of the vitamin from food sources and supplements is linked to a reduced risk of AMD in women under the age of 75.

Women with the highest vitamin D intake were 59 per cent less likely to develop the **disease** than those with the lowest levels. Despite sun being the most important source of vitamin D, the **protection** was only seen when vitamin D was consumed.

Scientists suggest the top food sources of vitamin D are milk, fish and fortified margarines and cereals. Consumption of omega 3 fish oils is also linked to higher protection.

'More studies are needed to verify this association as well as to better understand the potential interaction between vitamin D status and genetic and **lifestyle** factors with respect to risk of AMD,' says lead author Dr Amy Millen.

Most people should be able to get the vitamin D they need from eating a varied and balanced **diet**, but Dr Millen suggests women should discuss whether or not they should be taking **supplements** with their physicians, based on their current vitamin D status.

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