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# Focus on Health

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Gynecologic Endocrinology

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## Vitamin D

Humans obtain most of their vitamin D (which is really a prohormone) from exposure of the skin to sunlight. Unfortunately this exposure also increases the risk of skin cancer. Even in latitudes with high sun exposure, vitamin D (especially vitamin D3) blood levels are not optimal and should be supplemented on a regular basis. In my experience, the best product available to accomplish this is over the counter vitamin D3-50. Once an optimal blood level of 60-80 has been achieved, maintenance dosage is one capsule per week.

No calcium supplements are needed or should be taken. You no longer need calcium with that dosage of Vitamin D3-50 (50,000 mg). It is overkill and could lead to kidney and gallstones. Magnesium, 200 mgm per day, is, however, recommended.

Diseases particularly affected by low vitamin D's effect on the immune system are psoriasis, multiple sclerosis, and asthma, as well as dementia.

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## Boswellia

**F**rom "The People's Pharmacy," in *The Dallas Morning News*, July 5, 2011: Boswellia is a tree resin that has traditionally been used in India to treat rheumatism, ulcers, and skin disorders. Research shows that it has anti-inflammatory activity. On the other hand, NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) can cause bleeding ulcers, gastritis, high blood pressure, ringing in the ears, rash, increased risk of heart attacks, strokes, and etc. These drugs include Motrin, Advil, Aleve, and a particularly bad one called Mobic. Beware!

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## Breast Cancer

**F**rom the journal *Nature Reviews Clinical Oncology* (September, 2011), emerging data suggest a dramatic new role for beta blockers in the treatment of breast cancer. This applies in particular to the drug Propranolol, invented in 1964. It is an old adrenergic receptor antagonist which reduces tumor metastasis, tumor recurrence, and cancer specific mortality.

As part of the professional services I feel should be provided by me to my patients, screening of the voluminous medical literature has become more and more important. The information in this newsletter is derived from periodicals and books which I have read and whose information I have consolidated. Perhaps you have seen an item that I have not included in this list or have not seen myself. If so, feel free to bring it to my attention.

**A** much newer drug, Exemestane, was just released. It was featured in the June 23, 2011 *New England Journal of Medicine*. Exemestane is taken once a day for 5 years and produces 65% protection against breast cancer for life. There is no reported toxicity and no adverse side effects. Medicare and most insurances cover it, leaving a total cost to the patient of \$39 per month.

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## Constipation

**C**hewing sugarless gum and possibly adding a few doses of Power Pudding (a mixture of bran, prune juice, and applesauce) can be an entirely safe and inexpensive solution to chronic constipation.

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