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Low vitamin D levels linked to type 2 diabetes in obese kids

Children with lower levels of vitamin D had higher degrees of insulin resistance

AFP RELAXNEWS

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Peter Dazeley/Getty Images
A study found that obese children with lower levels of vitamin D had higher degrees of insulin resistance.

Another study underscoring the importance of the sunshine vitamin has found that low vitamin D levels in obese children could be a precursor to the development of type 2 diabetes.

To be published in the January 2012 edition of the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism, the study found that obese children with lower levels of vitamin D had higher degrees of insulin resistance, researchers said.

Though they stopped short of concluding that vitamin D deficiency causes abnormal glucose metabolism, researchers from the University of Texas said their study suggests that low vitamin D levels may play a role in the development of type 2 diabetes.

In the study, scientists measured vitamin D levels, blood sugar levels, serum insulin, BMI and blood pressure in 411 obese children and 87 non-overweight kids.

Participants were asked to provide their dietary information like soda, juice and milk consumption, average fruit and vegetable intake and breakfast-eating habits.

What emerged were clear associations between lower vitamin D levels in obese children who had poor dietary habits like skipping breakfast, and increased consumption of soda and juice, researchers said.

Meanwhile, a study published last month out of the University of Missouri-Columbia found that obese teenagers need significantly more vitamin D than their leaner counterparts -- seven times more than the current daily recommended intake of 600 International Units (IU).

That's because obese adolescents absorb vitamin D in their fat stores and are about half as efficient as their leaner counterparts at metabolizing their benefits, researchers said.

Their study called for obese adolescents to up their vitamin D intake to 4,000 IUs.

While the body is able to store vitamin D from the sunny summer months, other foods sources include cheese, mackerel, sardines, salmon and fish liver oil.