

the d-list

Bride to Be beauty editor Faith Campbell tackles your beauty dilemmas. This issue she uncovers how a common deficiency — seen in 1/3 of Australian adults — affects your health

My doctor says I'm low in Vitamin D, but I'm not sure how this affects me or what I should do to fix it. I've been told I need to get out in the sun, but won't this damage my skin?

I used to be that "a little sun" was the cure-all for tiredness, common colds and even a case of the blues. But with the degradation of the ozone layer came the increase in melanoma and the edict to 'slip, slop, slap'. As a result, there's been a spike in the number of people suffering from a lack of 'the sunshine vitamin', Vitamin D.

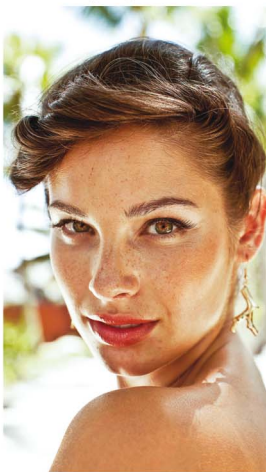
But what does this mean for your health? 'Severe fatigue, osteoporosis, muscle weakness, and a 30-50% increased risk of cancers of the colon, prostate and breast' are all symptoms of a Vitamin D deficiency according to Karen Fischer, nutritionist and author of *Younger Skin in 28 Days* (Exisle Publishing). It's scary stuff, and a convincing reason to rectify the situation — but did you know that lacking in Vitamin D can also affect your appearance?

'Vitamin D helps control the immune protective mechanisms of the skin,' says Emma Hobson, Dermalogica Education Manager. In practical terms, a deficiency means your skin is less resistant to inflammation and irritation. 'Low Vitamin D levels have been linked to chronic skin conditions such as rosacea, eczema and psoriasis,' Emma explains.

Though your response to a deficiency may not be this extreme, a lack of Vitamin D can also lead to one of the more common, and obvious, signs of damaged skin, pigmentation. 'Vitamin D is believed to assist with helping to

prevent pigmentation,' says Emma. Add to this the fact that 'as people age the skin's ability to produce Vitamin D declines' and you've got two of the key ingredients for older-looking skin. But it's not just your skin that will suffer, healthy looks also love Vitamin D, as it 'plays a role in the hair cycle and is needed to stimulate follicles during the growth phase,' Karen adds.

So, with an estimated one billion people worldwide suffering a deficiency, how can you boost your Vitamin D levels without subjecting your skin to the sun's harmful rays? 'While your face, hands, neck and chest should be protected with sunscreen at all times to shield against premature ageing, sunscreens will block the production of Vitamin D in your skin,' says Karen. Strike a balance by avoiding sun exposure between 10am and 3pm, when the sun is at its hottest and harshest. 'Ten minutes of direct sunlight in the morning or late afternoon is enough to boost Vitamin D production in the skin,' she says. Vitamin D can also be absorbed through diet, with Karen suggesting 'two serves of fish and other seafood each week' for healthy levels. Lastly, don't even think about using a deficiency as an excuse to work on your tan. 'Our body can only absorb a certain amount of Vitamin D at any one time, so excessive sun exposure has no added benefit,' says Emma. 'It merely increases your risk of skin cancer!'



1 Alpha-H Ultra Protector SPF 30+, \$54.95. See alpha-h.com 2 Dermalogica Ultra Sensitive Tint SPF 30, \$50. See dermalogica.com.au

3 Invisible Zinc Four Hour Water resistant SPF 30+, \$19.95. See invisiblezinc.com.au 4 Jurlique Sun Lotion SPF 30+, \$70. See jurlique.com.au

5 ModelCo Daily Face Mattifying Sunscreen and Lip Balm 50+, \$24.95. See modelcocosmetics.com 6 MooGoo SPF 15 lip balm, \$5.50. See moogoo.com.au

7 Younger Skin in 28 Days, by Karen Fischer. See existepublishing.com.au