

Vitamin D May Protect Against Breast Cancer in Black and Latina Women

Black and Latina women have low vitamin D levels compared with non-Latina white women.

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Black and Latina women with low levels of vitamin D were more likely to develop breast cancer compared with those with sufficient levels.

Despite existing evidence suggesting that [vitamin D](#) may help to prevent [breast cancer](#), few studies have considered the role of race/ethnicity in this link.

[A new study](#) published in the peer-reviewed journal *Cancer* collected data from women who self-identified as Black/African American and non-Black Hispanic. Katie O'Brien, PhD, of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, and her colleagues gathered blood samples from 415 women (290 Black, 125 non-Black Hispanic) who later developed breast cancer as well as 1,447 women (1,010 Black, 437 Latina) who did not.

With an average follow-up of 9.2 years, researchers found that women with adequate levels of vitamin D had a 21% lower breast cancer rate than women with vitamin D deficiency (less than 20 nanograms/milliliter). The link was strongest among Latina women, who had a 48% lower rate, and weakest among [Black women](#), who had an 11% lower rate.

These findings indicate that vitamin D may protect women against breast cancer, including those in racial/ethnic groups with low average levels of vitamin D.

The sun is one of the best sources of vitamin D (the skin absorbs the sun's UVB radiation and converts it into vitamin D₃), but it can also be found in tuna, shrimp, salmon, oysters, mushrooms, egg yolks, and fortified foods like cow's milk, plant-based milk alternatives (soy, almond, hemp milk), orange juice and certain types of yogurt, [according to Healthline](#).

"Together with prior studies on this topic, this article suggests that vitamin D may be associated with reduced risk of breast cancer, including among women who self-identify as Black, African American, Hispanic or Latina," O'Brien said in a [news release](#). "Because women who identify as members of these groups have lower vitamin D levels, on average, than non-Hispanic white women, they could potentially receive enhanced health benefits from interventions promoting vitamin D intake. However, questions remain about whether these associations are truly causal

and, if so, what levels of vitamin D are most beneficial.”

To learn more about the association between cancer and vitamin D, read “[Vitamin D May Protect Against Young-Onset Colorectal Cancer.](#)”

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