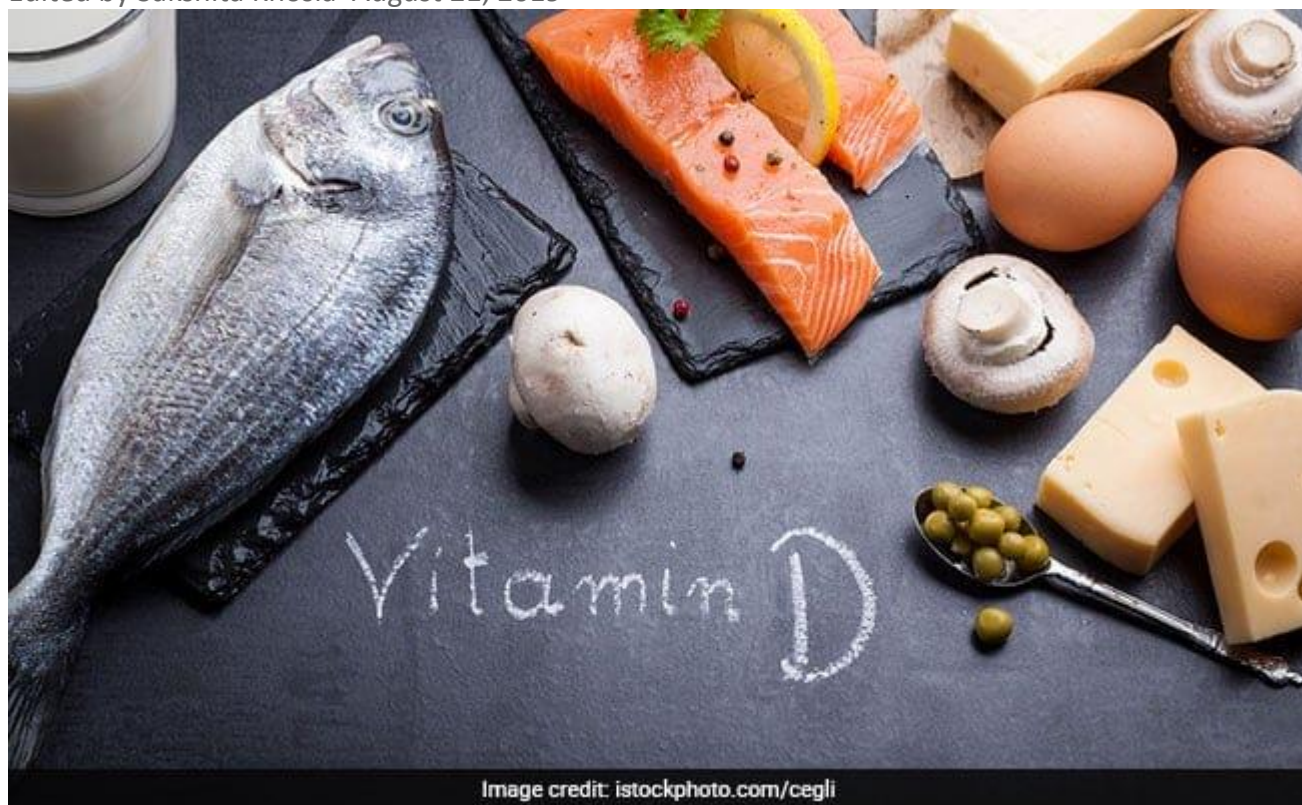


Vitamin D Deficiency: Study Suggests Wheat-Fortification As Cost Effective Way Of Preventing Deficiency

The study has said that fortifying wheat with this essential nutrient could prevent around 10 million cases of Vitamin D deficiency, over the next 90 years.

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Fortifying wheat with Vitamin D may prevent deficiencies

Vitamin D is an essential nutrient required by the body for a number of functions. One of the most important functions of Vitamin D is to improve the absorption of calcium and phosphorus, resulting in strong and healthy bones. Additionally, Vitamin D or the sunshine vitamin is also important for reducing the risks of a number of ailments including mood disorders, dementia, diabetes and heart diseases etc. A new study has now said that

fortifying wheat with this essential nutrient could prevent over 10 million cases of Vitamin D deficiency, over the next 90 years. This study is the first one to look at the health and economic impact of prevention of Vitamin D deficiency.

The study titled, "Cardiac, bone and growth plate manifestations in hypocalcemic infants: revealing the hidden body of the vitamin D deficiency iceberg" was published in the *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. The study was conducted to develop a decision-analytic model for estimating the cost-effectiveness of population-wide strategies to prevent deficiency of Vitamin D. The researchers found that mandatory fortification of wheat flour with Vitamin D was not just economical, but it would also significantly reduce the burden on health authorities by preventing millions of new cases of the deficiency. Additionally, offering Vitamin D supplements to targeted groups of the population could also help.

This is because there are only limited dietary sources of Vitamin D. The combination of wheat fortification with distribution of supplementation could together prevent 33 per cent or 13 million cases of this deficiency in the United Kingdom, concluded the researchers. The study report said, "The morbidity and mortality from symptomatic vitamin D deficiency in infants is fully preventable. We call for renewed public health emphasis on strategies of vitamin D supplementation through food fortification and robust, accountable supplementation programs, with monitored adherence during routine prenatal and child surveillance visits."