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02/16/2017 10:47:41 AM

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Three million of us could stave off colds and flu each year if we took Vitamin D supplements. That's according to new research published in the British Medical Journal. It studied 11,000 people and Found that a daily dose of the sunshine vitamin can protect against acute respiratory infections. But Public Health England said evidence on Vitamin D is inconsistent and that this study does not provide sufficient evidence "to support recommending Vitamin D for reducing the risk of respiratory tract infections." Let's talk now to nutritionist Jenny Rosborough. And also to Professor who is head of nutritional services at the University of Surrey. Thank you for joining us. Tell us a bit more, first of all, Jenny, about the benefits you think there may be on vitamin D? So this particular

research is looking at the benefits of a supplementation of vitamin department on respiratory tract infections like cold or flu, but we know that the proven consistent evidence of vitamin D is much more round bone and muscle health. That what our current recommendations are based on. Should everyone take it? If there is a suggestion it helps, it won't cause you any harm? On in excess it will cause harm but not in the amounts found in supplementation. The recommendation is that even should take a supplement in the winter months and in autumn, because we get a lot of vitamin D from sunshine, obviously in the UK we don't get a lot that at this time of the year, and for those population groups at risk they should take them the whole year round, so people with darker skin or who aren't exposed to sunlight as much. Susan, what do you think about this research? Very much agree with

your press conference speaker, it is a very nice piece of work, that has been done by a very reputable group, in London. It is a met a analysis, it is pulling together randomised controlled trial, one of the interesting things with the study is it shows the greatest effect in those who have a vitamin D status less than 25 perlitre, that is what was... Sorry, put that in lay person's language then. That is kind of like the cut off point for very low vitamin D status, so what the study showed was the effect, it was greatest in those with this very low level of vitamin D status and was most ebeneficial in those who were

taking a vitamin D supplement on a daily or weekly basis, rather than a large bolus dose, a very large amount taken at one time. OK. In terms of the best way to get vitamin D, if you want it is it's a supplement, how else can you get it? Apart from the sunlight and even that is tricky, in the summer we are covering ourself in sun tan lotion, covering up because we are worried about skin cancer risk so supplementation is what is recommended. It is one of those vitamins we can't get easily from food. It is in oily fish and egg yolks, they might be food people don't consume. If you had an oily fish once a week. The recommendation is we have fish twice a week but that is for different benefit, so for the general public, yes, everyone really should have a

supplement. It is fort anied if -- fortified in sup products. Would you still need a supplement? The general recommendation is still that we should have this supplement. OK. Why is it, Susan, that vitamin D has this effect? It seems? It is a very unusual nutrient in that our main source is not diet, it is UV B ex pore sure, so the best way of telling if you are in the right sunlight your shadow has to be shorter than your height. That is a useful tip to remember for people, so between really April and September, is when you would get your vitamin D. In terms of it, so we talk about it as a vitamin, it is not a vital aiming which is what the term vitamin means, it's a pro hormone so it is made in the body.

What we know about vitamin D is that it has our cells in the body need vitamin D to work, so a number of immune function cells need vitamin D to operate effectively. That is what makes it so interesting as a nutrient to focus on. Thank you both very much. Thank you.