

## **Biggest-Ever Vitamin D and Omega-3's Study Planned**

Boston, MA--Brigham and Women's Hospital (a teaching hospital affiliated with Harvard University) will embark on the largest study of vitamin D and marine-based omega-3 supplementation ever conducted.

A research team led by JoAnn E. Manson, M.D., and Julie Buring, Sc. D., will enroll 20,000 Americans from every state in its VITAL (VITamin D and OmegA-3 TriaL) study to see whether moderate-to-high levels of vitamin D (2,000 IU) and/or omegas (one gram) can help prevent heart disease, stroke and cancers such as colorectal, breast and prostate. It will also collect information about other health conditions like cognitive function and diabetes. The five-year study will ask women older than 65 and men over 60 who have no history of cancer or heart disease to take either vitamin D supplements plus a placebo; an omega supplement plus a placebo; both a vitamin D and an omega supplement; or two placebos every day. They also must fill out questionnaires every year.

Manson noted that this large-scale study is needed to understand "the benefits and risks" of taking vitamin D and omega-3 supplements so that individuals don't "jump on the bandwagon to take mega-doses of these supplements before clinical trials help to clarify their role." The group also hopes to enroll a large group of African Americans to see whether race has an effect on the results. The National Institutes of Health through the National Cancer Institute and the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute are funding the research.

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