**EVERY DAY DEMANDS D…At least in Seattle**

If you live north of Atlanta, chances are good you are deficient in vitamin D. There simply isn’t enough sunshine to get the UVB rays needed for the skin to produce it. Sadly, most American’s levels of vitamin D are suboptimal (under 30 nanograms/mL).

As a mental health counselor, this is concerning. Twenty years ago, everyone thought D’s contribution to health was making strong bones. That’s when we started seeing it added to all our milk products. As it turns out, that may now be the least of it. Vitamin D is a chief mood regulator. It helps to control the expression of neurotransmitters dopamine, acetylcholine and serotonin, all “feel good” chemicals in the brain. As people’s vitamin D levels drop, so does their mood.

Ongoing studies show that the nutrient plays a regulatory role in almost every system in the body, but most notably the brain. We now know that vitamin D facilitates memory consolidation and executive function, while clearing out toxins implicated in Alzheimer’s disease and dementia. As it turns out, the vitamin deficiency not only puts our elderly at risk, the most affected are young adults. They tend to be indoor working the most hours without any sunlight.

As a resident of Seattle my entire life, I have experienced my share of grey and rainy days. I practice what I preach and have been a proponent of taking vitamin D for the last 10 years. My first line of defense against depression, lack of focus and concentration and seasonal affective disorder, is a dose of D !

Facts About D

Vitamin D deficiency has been rising since 1980, largely due to the use of sunscreen.

Very few foods contain vitamin D. Salmon and sardines are the richest in nutrients.

Deficiency in D is linked to the development of diabetes, autoimmune disorders and cardiovascular disease.

Long-term vitamin D supplementation has been shown to lower all causes of mortality.

The RDA for Vitamin D is only 600 International Units daily but doctors are now giving 50,000 IU injections to patients who are deficient.

Many doctors are recommending 4,000 IU of vitamin D daily when living in the northern states.

Vitamin D has been show in improve overall mood.

Gina Guddat – LMHC www.ginaguddat.com