The Power Of Improving Vitamin D Using Light Therapy for Optimal Health Transcript

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Introduction and Guest Background

Welcome to another episode of the MS and Autoimmune interview series. I'm Doctor Terry Wahls, your host, and my next guest is David Letourneau. He is a successful serial entrepreneur and the author of the book Own the Perfect Business.

He has over 30 years of experience building businesses and is the president of Energy Incorporated, a manufacturer and distributor of energy vitamin D light therapy device.

He believes that our health span can match our lifespan as enthusiastically, helping people achieve that goal by helping them improve their vitamin D status.

He's a so welcome. David Letourneau, I'm so glad you're here. Now, as I said, David Letourneau is the president of, energy, and he's all about vitamin D.

So let's talk about vitamin D and how we make vitamin D. That is a subject near and dear to my heart. And it really starts with where we were designed and how we were designed to get our vitamin D in the first place.

The only place that we got vitamin D, or mostly was from the sun and our skin. In the process of our skin being contacted by UVB rays would start the process to create vitamin.

We stop for a moment and explain to our listener what UVB rays are. Sure, go ahead with that. Yeah. Go ahead. Up to you. But, the sun is the source of vitamin D through UVB rays.

The sun's makeup is 95% UVA rays and 5% UVB. The vitamin D comes from those UVB rays. And because it's just that 5%, the UVA is what gets dermatologists kind of excited in a rather negative way, because those are long form waves and they go deep into our skin.

How Vitamin D Is Made From Sunlight

And if we stay too long, burned, do it too often throughout our lifetime. It can cause us trouble in the long run. And that's why dermatologists are always warning us about the sun and covering up.

And it's the UVA that is associated with higher rates of skin cancers. Squamous cell basal cell cancers, melanomas. And that's part of why they're trying to reduce the amount of sunlight that we get.

But UVB is another very specific part of the spectrum of light that is responsible when it hits our skin for beginning the activation, of cholesterol and then, you know, gets another activation, in our kidneys to be the fully active form of, vitamin D, right?

And so the, the, the challenge that we have with trying to get our vitamin D from sunshine is multi-pronged. First off, it's the safety feature, the safety factor, and trying to get out there.

It's only at midday that we get UVB, that we get the vitamin D. Even in sunny climes. I'm located in Arizona. And right now, when this is being recorded, it's.

And, well, what we call wintertime and everybody does in January and we've got about an hour and a half a day to get any UVB rays of enough to give us vitamin D.

And for reference point for those that are interested, the UV index has to be three or above to be receiving and have your body actually converting that 70 high, high cholesterol in our skin and start that process to vitamin D, as

you're saying.

And so we've got a very short period of time even even in this, even in this latitude. So if I wanted to know what the UV index was today here in Iowa in January, how would I find that out?

Is that in my weather report? Absolutely. Usually second or third item in your, on your weather page, at least on on iPhone and Android. But but at least on, whatever they give us for our weather report on Android Australia.

You got me, really curious. So I'm going to go look at, well, can I look at my weather app to see that today there? And I can already tell you what yours is going to be in Iowa, doctor Wells.

Okay. It's this time of year when Iowa gets zero. By the way, the temperature, the height is -24. Oh, my. And I'm not finding, my, UVB, pressure, just UV index.

Should be, on your weather. Are you on an iPhone? I'm on the iPhone. Air quality is good. Mine. Mine comes up today on the right hand side. First box.

And, here in Arizona right now, which is just past 8:00 in the morning, it's zero here. And that's based on the angle of the sun. It is sunny out there, but you're not.

It's certainly going to be low. In Iowa, I would think very low. You can't make enough probably at least December, January, February. And I'm guessing it probably also includes November, as well.

Can't make enough anything north. Well, can't make any, anything north of the 35th parallel, which is approximately Las Vegas to Atlanta, has a period of zero.

And, of course, the further north you go, the longer that period is. So I'm not completely clear on how long, how many months it would be for Iowa, but it would be, it would play off time again for the listeners.

That's why there's a latitude of, gradient for higher rates of relapses, new lesions, higher rates of multiple sclerosis are the further you get from the equator.

UV Index, Latitude, and Seasonal Deficiency

The researchers link this to the amount of UV light exposure that we have and our vitamin D levels. Why? Canada, the UK, Scandinavia have much greater rates of multiple sclerosis and really all systemic autoimmune diseases for those very reasons.

Exactly. And even as compared to that, as trivial as the cold, as a cold or the flu is, that's the reason that we have cold and flu season is not in the summer. Yes.

You know, we don't have the, the immune protection that's driven fairly significantly by vitamin D. And so, so that's part of the problem. So can you comment as to what all vitamin D does?

You know, in my body, when I have sufficient levels, it's extensive. And we there's we love this book called Embrace the Sun that was written by doctor Mark Sorensen and Doctor William Grant.

Doctor Grant is on our medical advisory board. And the reason that we love this book is because it talks about the benefits of sunshine, which we've brought indoors with our device.

But, there's about 286 pages of discussing the benefits, but the important part here is there's about then after that, there's about 80 pages of the citations of the research that back what they've claimed in those 286 pages of, of dialog.

So really important because anybody that has an interest, there's 1224 research studies here that talk about what

vitamin D does and why it's so important to get in that sunshine if you can.

Now it's a challenge. And that's why we took on this project three years ago. It took us two years and a few million dollars to develop the device with.

We've, So, look, let's let's talk about your device. So what? What is this? It's a, it's a led driven, patented device that produces UVB. And why I mentioned earlier the importance of the the relationship or the amount of UVA and UVB is the 95% UVA we get in sunshine is the reason for concern.

The 5% means of UVB means it just takes us quite a while, and it's very difficult to, to manage your exposure to sun safely. And so what we've done is, again, just the miracle of, engineering.

And in this time, we were able to produce this device with 95% UVB, 5% UVA. Now UVA is still important. We get nitric oxide endorphin, serotonin, BDF.

We get a lot of important elements from the UVA, but it's the relationship of UVA, UVB that is the concern. So we've reversed that. What's in sunshine so that we can very safely deliver it.

The other part that's very safe is we've been able to do this in a way that the treatment time, the exposure to the light, which is once a day maximum, but the treatment time is only 1 to 2 minutes on the torso, on the front, on bare skin and on the lower back, 1 to 2 minutes.

So 2 to 4 minutes total. And the research shows us that that gives us the equivalent of 2 to 4 hours of healthy sunshine without a bad part. So I stand in front, expose my belly.

Yeah. And my, timer said 1 or 2 minutes and I try. Yeah, it's all it's all in the app. So. So when, when a person decides to do this, they'll download the app.

Vitamin D Benefits and Optimal Levels

The app will walk them through the, the skin test to determine exactly what skin type they are, their age, their weight, all all of that. And then there's a large big matrix that was put together by our medical professionals to say, okay, this is how much time they're going to get in front of that light.

Now, it's very precisely measured because when you, like you said, belly up to it, you're pressing right against the bezel of of the device, which is 10.5in wide, nine inches tall.

So right against it. So we know exactly the distance from the light source and the amount of skin that we're exposing. We often get asked, is it because am I am I doing my torso because there's so many important organs behind that?

And the answer is no, not at all. This is systemic. We want to create the vitamin D within the system, and that is done on the surface of the skin is as you know, okay, so am I going to get a tan box on my tummy, a box on my back?

No. If we we think that'd be great because then as we're at the beach or something, we've, we've got that ego building part where I'm the healthy one with the square tan.

But no, it actually doesn't really tan that much. Just if you're treating yourself virtually every day, five, six, seven days a week, you'll have a little bit of color, but it's not to the point where you really notice it.

Now that is super interesting. So I'm raising my vitamin D, I'm not stimulating the melanocytes to make pigment answers as to why that is. Well, the as you know, a tanning bed is mostly gay and red, but, you know, so the tan is from UVA.

Not really the UVA. UVB contributes, but the UVA is the is the major tanning part as far as changing the color of the skin. Super interesting. So we can we can boost our vitamin D level.

And what what is the optimal vitamin D level that you'd like to have people get to? We we base that on on our, our advisory board. And they, they concur and we're where we draw this from is by asking them not what they recommend to the general public in print, but where do you keep your own and what do you like your family to be?

And, and the answer is almost always the same, around 80. So we say 60 to 100. And that's nanograms per milliliter. Of course, in the US, so we say 60 to 180 being really optimal.

100 is fine. And quite frankly, from everything again, we've been through with, with the researchers up to 150. So not a problem with the medical community sometimes gets excited.

But that's more due to I, I think lawyers probably than anything. And so I doctor Bruce Hollis of the Medical University of South Carolina is on our board as well.

And one of the first questions I asked him when he agreed to join us was how many times in the 46 years that you've done vitamin D research? And yeah, I'm sure you know, Doctor Hollis, he's been introduced as the godfather of vitamin D sometimes when I've heard him introduced and I asked him in 46 years, how many times have you seen vitamin D toxicity?

And his answer was not he hasn't seen it. And so really, really important for people to understand, it's highly unlikely that you would get to toxicity.

It would typically be maybe an accident. Yeah. You know for the listeners, the body has some really nice internal mechanisms. If we're if our skin is making the vitamin D that prevent, overload.

And so if you're taking vitamin D supplements by mouth that built in mechanism for that will break down the vitamin D and prevent overload is bypassed when you take it by mouth.

And then, another super interesting way of thinking about by media is if you look at breast milk, what does mothers vitamin D level have to be for the vitamin D to be appearing in the breast milk?

Doctor, your health is the leader in that research. And, what what has he told you? It's really important. Vitamin D for the for the baby is really important during pregnancy and and after delivery in both cases.

And if if the mother is high enough in her vitamin D, but it's going to need to be quite high, then she can probably support the baby through the process.

But, so that's what I've read, is you want it to be it'll first begin to show up in breast milk. If your level is above 50. And so to me, that makes it very clear that I want my level above 50.

And I completely agree that I like to see a level around 80. In my clinical trials, we can we use a minimum of 40 to 80 is the recommended in my clinical practice.

I agree, I, I'm very comfortable with people being at 80 to 100. I always get a but calcium level as well. So if it happens to slip up above 100, I know what their calcium level is.

And as long as the calcium level is okay, I'm not so concerned. I do stress to my listeners, the importance of, having enough magnesium, vitamin A, vitamin K2 so that you can fully utilize your vitamin D, and you can have all of the, benefits.

Really important. The magnesium gives us almost a 50% boost in the utilization of vitamin D in the creation of vitamin D.

The Energy Light Device and How It Works

And then, of course, as we know, the K2, helps regulate, make sure that it calcify as our bones and our and puts it to work properly, you know, and what can happen for the people again, for the listeners, if you're taking only vitamin D without vitamin K, the vitamin D will increase your body's ability to absorb calcium from your diet.

So you get more calcium in your bloodstream. And then some folks, you know, we're worried about our bones, osteoporosis. So we're taking supplemental calcium and we're taking vitamin D or absorbing more calcium.

And that calcium can show up in the lining of the blood vessels and the heart valves, which is why high dose vitamin D can sometimes be linked to higher risk for heart attack and stroke.

That's for people who are taking supplements, particularly if they're taking calcium supplements in addition. But they're taking supplemental vitamin D and not taking magnesium, not taking a vitamin K2.

They're going to, you know, have much higher risk for this calcium, calcium lining the blood vessels align the heart valves and having some untoward consequences.

But if you're if you're getting your vitamin D through the sun or through this device and yeah, we sort of talked about the device, but what's the name of the device.

It's called energy RG energy. And it's, it's we call it the vitamin D light. Now if people are looking at other lights like, seasonal affective disorder, would those lights also boost vitamin D?

It really depends. There's there's of course, so many out there, most lights that are delivering UVB, are bulbs. And so the challenge with with just a bare bulb is, number one, you really don't want any UV in your eyes, so you'd want to wear eye protection if you're using anything with the bare bulb or, or what I call an angle.

And can you explain why you don't want anything with UV in your house that. Well, it's it's again the reason you don't look at the sun is the UV. It's so that that it can damage your, your retina and so that that is just wear eye protection.

It's one of the reasons that we designed this device in such a way that it's all enclosed in. You're treating your belly, you can't look at it if you back away.

We have sensors in there that shuts it off. So if you back away to try and peek, it shuts it off. So you can't really look at it. And if you're the odd person, the other reason for the sensors is some people of course, have an extra little bit of weight around their around their belly.

And so if they intrude into that space a little bit, then those sensors will detect closer to the light, meaning we cut the power a little bit. And so it's a sophisticated device that way we like to refer to it as precision engineering, so that we're giving people the exact dosage that they can handle and with with its time, distance and dosage that determine the benefit that we get or the concern that we have.

And so, so that's an important part of what we're doing here. So can you can, people using this slide get to an optimal vitamin D level. We've got significant case studies now.

We've been we're now over a year since we introduced our beta phase, which we did here in the Phoenix area in ten facilities that had people being treated.

And we were tracking their progress. And so the answer is absolutely. Good example is this about 25% of people do not absorb, assimilate or make use of oral vitamin D.

And so they're really hooked if they're north of the 30. And and it's not easy for them if they're south of the 35th. Because as I said, it's difficult to manage exposure to sunshine.

The other part is, as we know, is we get very little vitamin D from our food. We get some, there's some in milk, there's some in fish, mushrooms, all these good foods that that we should be eating and drinking.

But, but it's you could never get anywhere close to enough vitamin D there. So what we found in the case studies, good example. And one that's really pure because we know he didn't have any oral vitamin D because he was one of the group that didn't assimilate.

So a fellow that we found very knowledgeable fellow on his health had been trying to get his vitamin D up for years, and he finally just gave up. He said, I, I can't get it up over 35, 40 kind of thing.

Thank you. Said the highest you ever got was 45. And so when we met, I described what we had. He got quite excited and got a device. I actually got one for home and one for office, so he could really stay on top of this and got the up, treated himself every day, five days a week for ten weeks or 50 treatments in 70 days.

And he went from a baseline. He tested himself before he started. He was 37, nanograms per milliliter. And in 50 treatments he was at 78. So he was very excited because it was the first time he was ever able to get it up there.

And that's that's pretty typical. There's of course, as we know, every body is different. Every chemistry is different within our body. Our skin type is different.

And so we can't say if you do 50, you will go from 37 to 78 or double or more than double. But what we can say is we've seen virtually everybody that's in front of the light moves up.

And so if they just continue, they will move up. The other part that's very encouraging is oral vitamin D. The the half life of oral vitamin D is about 17 or 18 days.

And with vitamin D that your body creates naturally with light, it's about six weeks. So we have a better chance of getting our vitamin D up through light as well.

And again, with no danger, because the research shows that those and you alluded to this when you were talking about the body's protective mechanisms, the research shows that those people that are in the sun all the time, that was the research based on lifeguards in bend, Southern California, and landscape workers that worked outside without shirts and things like that.

Safety, Toxicity, and Supporting Nutrients

And they did, research on that. And none of them ever got above about 100 to 110 in that range. And they just stayed there. No mat. And they're just in the sun all the time kind of thing.

And so, so that that is a nice comforting factor here as well, that your body's really smart with this. Correct, our body will begin to break vitamin D down that we make through the skin when we get, somewhere between 100 and 150 that you just can't get any higher than that because your body will, break it down.

Now, in addition, we are producing melanin, and so we're tanning, so we don't make as much vitamin D, as the skin becomes pigmented and tanning. But you also break it down, so you can't.

It's really, there are not reports of toxicity from tanning, from being out in sunlight. Right? Yeah. Now, you mentioned that you had these case reports of people whose vitamin D level, you know, climbed.

Did you collect any other information in terms of, any other health or mood or quality of life from these individuals? Not not formally. And that's yet to come in our in our, progression here.

But the, the most common thing that we hear back from people in the early stage is I'm sleeping better. I have more energy. I had an 82 year old man recently that got is device.

And it was fairly quickly, a matter of few weeks that he reported back. He phoned me because he was so excited. He said, I'm riding my bike again. I got my balance back.

And as we know, balance is part of vitamin D benefits as well. So that's what I consider the rule. Let's talk more about that balance and vitamin D. What can you tell our listeners more about that connection.

You know the research on that? I do not know. So I really can't comment further other than to know it's related. And it's often mentioned and I haven't read the research on that, so I really can't comment too deeply on it.

But like I say, we had we had, you know, one example that that was really outstanding. It's it's kind of one of the things that, you know, is so important in terms of just our satisfaction we get from our work when we get calls like that.

It really makes the, you know, the time, the money we've invested in the, you know, all the things that we've done here, just be that much more rewarding, gives you a reason to get up in the morning when you get reports like that.

So what what got you inspired to do this work? Wow. Beautiful question. Thank you. Doctor walls. We had this technology, this patented technology that really can exploit and build an LED light card that can emit light wave anywhere on the on the spectrum and on the light spectrum.

And we met some doctors that were doing a clinical trial at LSU medical and peer reviewed at Baylor. And this was an early days of Covid. And they they were treating those critically ill Covid patients with several them in the ICU.

And like I say, definitely needed help. And so they put this clinical trial together, treating them with UVB and only UVB. And the results of the clinical trial were a 60% reduction in mortality.

So a really important, finding in terms of so, again, for the listeners, people were in, May I want to sure. I'm getting this quickly in the intensive care unit.

They began doing UVB. Was it with your device or. We created some devices for them, but frankly, those were the first ones to not have the level of controls they wanted.

So they ended up having to use more of a rudimentary kind of a procedure with, with bulbs. And so we can do a lot better for them on their next go round, that's for sure.

Case Studies and Clinical Results

But it was UVB and and they probably had more UVA in it. Not probably. I know they would have had more UVA in it. It was the UVB that creates the advantages through the boost in immunity and for the listeners, the vitamin D, we call it a vitamin.

Our body makes it and it really it's more like a hormone. There are vitamin D receptors in the brain, in our immune cells. It really throughout all of our tissues.

And we continue to deepen our understanding of the critical role that vitamin D, which is really more of a hormone, has on how everything works in our body.

And if we don't have enough, we are much more ill, much more frail. Our moods are, are down our brain function is down, our immune cells are less effective.

And so figuring out ways to bring our vitamin D up, is vitally important. Our ancestors, when we migrated out of Africa, we were able to have a really good vitamin D level during the summer because we were outside 24 over seven, three and 65.

And then during the winter, vitamin D levels declined. We have more pneumonias more infections. Were outside,

and we begin making vitamin D again. Depending on your latitude, we would begin making Bowman D sometime in the spring, right.

Sometimes that spring, it's, you know, I like to refer to it in this way because as you're saying here, we have, give or take around 37 trillion cells in our body.

Almost all of them have a receptor for vitamin D, and when we're low, which in the US the statistics are very clear, the research is clear 89.9% of people are low.

Now that's defining low as 30 or below. Well, that's really low. As we've said we'd rather be closer to 80. So when you define it up in that 60 to 100 range, it's almost everyone we've seen in a period here.

Just not too long ago, we saw 55 vitamin D tests in just a short period of time. Do you know how many were in range? As we define range of 60 and above to. Yeah.

So so it's almost everyone. But the way I like to give the analogy is you've got these 37 trillion cells, mostly with vitamin D receptors, most of them not getting the vitamin D they really want to have.

And if we had a, a check engine light in the middle of our forehead like we do on our car, it would be on for almost everyone saying, check your vitamin D.

And, I think that's just something important for people to understand. And so your listeners, and, you know, you do as well, but we just encourage people, get your level checked and, and it's so easy these days because we can do it by poking our finger, dripping a little bit of blood on a, on a blood spot test and nail it in, get the results sent to us.

So it's you don't even have to go do a blood draw. I mean, a blood draw is great, and I'm sure you order a lot of those and did it that way. It's it's simply not do anything special.

But people should know their vitamin D level for sure. Okay, well, why don't you tell our listeners where they could learn more about you and your company and this wonderful device?

We we have a fair amount of information and FAQs on our website. It's energy.com NY rg.com. And we also have a place where people can ask questions so they can just send a question to contact@energy.com.

We're happy to answer those.

Company Mission and Where to Learn More

And typically we have our top people answer those questions so that we get them accurately answered because they are quite often technically oriented questions.

This is wonderful. Again everyone. Vitamin D, super important, very helpful. And this is a safe way to increase your vitamin D to optimal levels without risk of toxicity, which we can say if we are using only a vitamin D, should be a vitamin D without vitamin K.

Correct. And, we're we're very excited about the work you're doing. Doctor Wahls. This is phenomenal. And this is where I started to say the short term benefits.

We talked about midterm colds and flu that we talked about a little bit. But then long term having your health increased so that our health span matches our life span.

That's one of our missions as a company, is to help people have that health span extended. In my own case, my mother and my father of both passed. Now, the average person in the U. S has ten years of ill health before they die.

And and in the case of my family, my mother had seven years of ill health. My dad had 13. And it just happens that you put those together and they were exactly average between them.

And we just see that if people know more doctors like you work with more, companies like ours, they should get that health span and lifespan hopefully linked up.

You know, I like to refer and I think positively of my grandfather on my dad's side, a farmer on the prairies, and, farmed until the day he died at 88.

And he got stuck in the mud and went to walk back to get help, and it was too much. And he had a big heart attack and died right there. And he never spent a day in the hospital, you know, and you just think, okay, pick me. Okay.

That would be a great way to go. Yeah. I feel healthy till the day he died, you know, lived a life that he obviously loved and, work that work that he appreciated.

Okay. One more time. How do people find your company? Energy.com Energy.com.