As the days grow shorter our exposure to sunshine gets more and more limited. Long sleeves and pants reduce this even more. Sunshine is necessary for our bodies to produce vitamin D. In winter time, most Americans are vitamin D deficient.

This is a serious issue as vitamin D is essential for a number of functions in the body and reduced amounts can lead to a number of problems. I have written in a previous article why the flu is more prevalent in the winter, because of lower levels of vitamin D in the blood. This is due to the significant effect that vitamin D has on strengthening the immune system. Low vitamin D may also play a role in the development of depression, body pain, heart attacks, cancer, diabetes, and increased risk of fracture.

So how much vitamin D should be taken daily? The only way to know for sure is to have the blood tested and retested while experimenting with different levels of daily supplementation. According to Julian Whitaker, M.D., a leading expert in nutritional health care, most Americans require 2,000 to 5,000 IU per day to achieve optimal blood levels.

Vitamin D is a relatively inexpensive supplement. Considering how important it is, there is no excuse to not supplement daily.