Vitamin D Could Help Prevent More Breast Cancer Than Currently Recognized

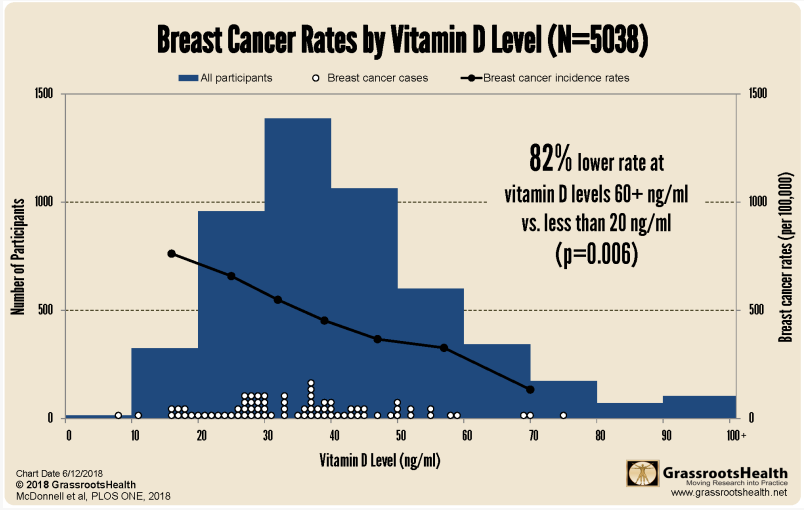
With more than 321,000 invasive breast cancer diagnoses expected in 2026, research suggesting vitamin D status may be an overlooked opportunity for prevention.

ENCINITAS, CA, UNITED STATES, October 20, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- An estimated 321,910 women in the United States will be diagnosed with invasive breast cancer in 2026, with another 60,730 cases of ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS), according to the American Cancer Society (ACS). Approximately 42,140 women are expected to die from breast cancer this year. Incidence continues to rise, particularly among women younger than 50.

The ACS estimates that more than 30% of breast cancers may be preventable through modifiable lifestyle factors, including physical activity, healthy weight, limiting alcohol, and breastfeeding when possible. But could that prevention potential be substantially greater?

GrassrootsHealth, a nonprofit public health research organization, points to decades of vitamin D research suggesting that, when considered alongside established prevention strategies, the potential for reducing

Bringing more awareness to breast cancer prevention



Breast cancer risk by 25(OH) vitamin D serum level (ng/ml)

breast cancer incidence could be considerably greater—perhaps approaching 70–80%.

Free webinar on Vitamin D in Cancer Prevention with Dr. Joan Lappe on 10/21

Is There Really No Evidence That Vitamin D Can Help Prevent Breast Cancer?

Major health organizations, including the American Cancer Society, have stated that research has not demonstrated a clear relationship between vitamin D status and breast cancer risk. Yet a substantial body of epidemiological, laboratory, and biological research supports an association between higher vitamin D blood levels and lower breast cancer incidence.

> The possibility of greatly increasing the amount of breast cancer prevention with something as simple, safe, and inexpensive as vitamin D deserves serious and urgent attention."
>
> *Jen Aliano, MS, Executive Director of GrassrootsHealth*

A 2018 pooled analysis by McDonnell and colleagues, involving 5,038 women, found 82% lower breast cancer incidence among women with vitamin D levels of at least 60 ng/mL compared with those below 20 ng/mL. A 2013 nested case–control study by Mohr et al. found a 70% lower risk of breast cancer among premenopausal women with vitamin D levels of at least 35 ng/mL compared to below 15 ng/mL. A 2019 meta-analysis by Song and colleagues, encompassing 70 observational studies, found 39% lower breast cancer odds when comparing the highest versus lowest vitamin D blood-level categories, although findings varied across study designs.

While randomized supplementation trials have produced inconsistent results, many evaluate assigned vitamin D doses rather than achieved blood concentrations or give doses that are too low to make a difference in blood level, two important distinctions given individual differences in dose-response.

"The evidence linking vitamin D status with breast cancer risk is too substantial to dismiss, and the possibility of greatly increasing the amount of prevention with something as simple, safe, and inexpensive as vitamin D deserves serious and urgent attention," said Jen Aliano, MS, Executive Director of GrassrootsHealth.

Cedric F. Garland, DrPH, a pioneering cancer epidemiologist at the University of California San Diego, whose research helped establish the scientific foundation for investigating sunlight,

vitamin D, and cancer prevention, emphasized the importance of taking action early in life:

“It is quite possible that the most effective tool we have to prevent breast cancer is raising the lifelong vitamin D status of all girls and women to a level where prevention begins. That will take screening for low vitamin D levels in the blood and raising it to a safe 40–60 nanograms per milliliter (ng/mL) range. It's good to catch breast cancer early, but even better to start along the road to preventing much of it with vitamin D.”

How Vitamin D May Help Protect Against Cancer: The Totality of Evidence

Vitamin D influences several biological processes involved in cancer development, including cellular differentiation, regulation of cell growth, programmed cell death, inflammation, immune function, and DNA repair. These mechanisms complement evidence from observational and prospective studies, ecological and geographic research examining sunlight exposure, and investigations of circulating vitamin D levels. Considered together, these different lines of research provide a scientific foundation for investigating vitamin D's potential role in breast cancer prevention, although the magnitude of any preventive effect remains uncertain.

Moving from Awareness to Prevention

This October, the American Cancer Society is emphasizing the importance of turning awareness into action. GrassrootsHealth has championed this message for years by recognizing October as Breast Cancer Prevention Month.

Prevention must begin long before a diagnosis. Young women deserve access to information about nutritional and lifestyle factors that may influence lifelong breast health, including understanding their vitamin D status and addressing deficiency through individualized guidance.

To advance this mission, GrassrootsHealth and the Helen Knoll Foundation have launched Strong Foundations for Breast Health, a fundraising campaign supporting prevention education, vitamin D testing, and practical resources for young women.

Founded in 2006, the Helen Knoll Foundation is dedicated to empowering young women to take proactive steps toward breast cancer prevention through education, advocacy, and access to age-appropriate screenings. Its outreach efforts have included high school and college campuses and community programs that help young women understand breast cancer risk factors and create habits to improve breast health.

Support the campaign: https://secure.givelively.org/donate/grassrootshealth/strong-foundation-for-breast-health

Upcoming Events Spotlight Vitamin D and Cancer Prevention

On October 21, GrassrootsHealth will host a free webinar featuring Joan M. Lappe, PhD, RN, FAAN, discussing her landmark 2007 and 2017 vitamin D and cancer prevention trials. Learn more and register: https://www.grassrootshealth.net/events/vitamin-d-in-breast-cancer-prevention-with-dr-joan-lappe/1792580400/1792584000

On November 2, World Vitamin D Day, GrassrootsHealth will present the inaugural Baggerly-Garland Vitamin D Scientist Awards, honoring Drs. Edward D. Gorham, William B. Grant, and Joan Lappe for their contributions to vitamin D and cancer prevention research. The ceremony and press conference is sponsored by Solius Labs and will take place at Moores Cancer Center, UC San Diego, with virtual attendance available.

Awards information and RSVP: https://www.grassrootshealth.net/events/inaugural-baggerly-garland-awards-ceremony-and-press-conference/1793617200/1793624400/

About GrassrootsHealth

Founded in 2007 by breast cancer survivor Carole Baggerly, GrassrootsHealth is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit public health research organization dedicated to moving vitamin D research into practice through research, education, and advocacy.

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