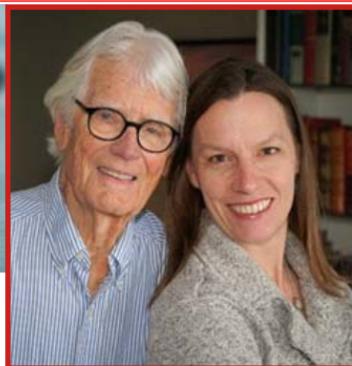


HEALTH CORNER



The Doctor Game IT'S DANGEROUS TO IGNORE VITAMIN K2

W. Gifford-Jones, M.D. and Diana Gifford-Jones

Some vitamins don't get the attention they deserve. Ask anyone about vitamin K2 and few people can give an answer. In Vitamin K2: The Missing Nutrient for Heart and Bone Health, Dr. Dennis Goodman says ignoring vitamin K2 can be dangerous. So here are some important points to help you understand why K2 needs more attention.

In 1929, Dr. Hendrik Dam, a Danish scientist, discovered vitamin K. Now we know there are two types of K: K1 and K2. Most people get sufficient amounts of K1 by eating leafy green vegetables, rich in this vitamin. If you're cut, K1 plays a role in blood clotting. K2 supports bone density. Bones, although solid structures, are not inert. Rather, they are constantly changing. Cells called osteoblasts build up bone, while other cells, osteoclasts, are breaking it down. Until around 30 years of age, osteoblasts win. But then osteoclasts take over in mid-life and we begin to lose one percent of bone mass each year.

There is a good solution. Bone must be built up early in life to ensure that it does not become like Swiss cheese later on, a condition called osteoporosis. These bones can snap like a dry twig, resulting in broken hips, which may mean ending life in a wheelchair or death.

Vitamin K2 serves the important role of helping direct calcium into bone where it belongs. A Japanese study showed that vitamin K2 decreases the risk of spinal fractures by 60 percent and hip fractures by 80 percent.

A combination of calcium and K2 is like building up money in the bank early in life. Later on, there will be enough calcium for some of it to be withdrawn from bones without causing a fracture.

K2 also supports cardiovascular health. If you have been reading this column for years, you know the benefits of vitamin C in decreasing the risk of coronary attack. But vitamin K2 also plays a role in fighting cardiovascular disease.

We all need calcium for strong bones. But too much calcium can be deposited into coronary and other arteries if there is a deficiency of vitamin K2. For instance, calcium can be deposited into the aorta, the largest artery in the body, that carries blood to all our organs. Calcium deposits in this location weaken the wall of the aorta increasing the risk of rupture and sudden death.

A Dutch study of 4,600 men aged 53 and older showed that a high intake of vitamin K2 decreased the risk of aorta calcification by 52 percent. Another study reported that K2 decreased the risk of coronary attack by 41 percent. In a study of 16,057 women, those on high doses of vitamin K2 lived 9 percent longer.

K2 can help with other health problems too. K2 acts like a traffic cop. It helps direct calcium traffic into tooth enamel decreasing the risk of dental decay. Some researchers report that K2 increases insulin sensitivity making it more effective in the fight against Type 2 diabetes.

There is no easy test to measure K2 levels. But if suffering from osteoporosis, heart disease or diabetes, you are most likely deficient in vitamin K2. Statin drugs to lower blood cholesterol inhibit K2 synthesis.

People who are taking blood thinners should not take vitamin K as it decreases the effectiveness of these drugs.

Vitamin K2 is an especially important partner to vitamin D, which controls the absorption of calcium. Various brands of K2, including in combination with D, are available, so check with a health food store and your doctor for guidance.

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Direct Answers

from Wayne & Tamara

LOOKING FOR LOOPHOLES

Q My boyfriend and I had a great start to our relationship. We were medical students then. We trusted each other and were both clear that cheating is a dealbreaker for us. When we moved to different cities to start our specialty training, we saw each other less. Things got busier but we tried working things out, always thinking about the light at the end of the tunnel. Nonetheless, we felt really happy once we met.

Two years ago, someone anonymously messaged me on a networking site saying my boyfriend was seeing someone else. There was no evidence, but I immediately called him and he denied it.

One day, I went into paranoid mode and checked his phone while he was asleep. I saw flirty messages. The next morning I confronted him and asked who she was. He said they were coworkers and friends, and he was just helping her review. That was our first big argument. Of course, I believed him. We even got engaged last year!

Fast forward to three months before our wedding. Another person messaged me, this time with proof! Turns out, their relationship became physical both before and after he proposed to me.

Bit by bit, he told me the truth. He admitted they were friends, part of a group who went out together and reviewed in his apartment, until the two of them were left alone. But he never once mentioned this group of friends to me. He said he was afraid I wouldn't give my permission to hang out with them.

He said the girl made a move and kissed him first, and his lust took over. After that, they had sex for a few more meetings until he realized what they were doing was wrong. He claims he ended it with the other woman three months ago and was going to tell me.

My life crumbled. The person I thought I knew best and trusted most, suddenly became a stranger. We broke up and our wedding was canceled.

A month and a half after D-day, we still communicate. He's remorseful and readily answers my calls, even though he knows I just want answers.

I will be flying to another country for 18 months of further training, while he'll be staying in our home country for his training. He says he'll fly to see me once he's done and court me again. He says I'm the person he wants to live with in this lifetime.

Can a person really change? Will I be able to get past this feeling of betrayal?

Heidi

A Heidi, a loophole is defined as an exemption that can be used to avoid the effect of a law. You and your boyfriend are both looking for a loophole.

In this case, the law you want to avoid is a law of human nature.

Your boyfriend's first line of defense was to lie. His second line of defense was to blame you. (You wouldn't approve of his group.) His third line of defense was to blame the other woman. (She started it.)

If you stay with him, his final defense will be, "It couldn't have been all that bad because Heidi stayed."

Of course it isn't all that bad to him. He's not the one betrayed. Proceeding as before is what a cheater wants because they are not the injured party. But if you had cheated on him, would he be so lenient on you? Of course not.

His excuses are the archetypal responses of a cheater who is caught. It's the classic pattern, but because you haven't been through this before, you don't recognize the pattern. Still, your gut told you to cancel the wedding.

When he blamed the other woman, he admitted he can "fall prey" to any other woman. In trying to wriggle off the hook, he set the hook. He admitted, "I cannot control myself and you cannot trust me."

You were not paranoid when you checked his phone. You smelled gas and looked for the leak. That's realism, not paranoia.

Perhaps you've had to explain to a patient that they have a terminal disease. Now you're on the other side of that. You must face that your relationship with this man is terminal.

Reactions to cheating—the disgust, the outrage at the unfairness, the suspicion, the traumatic response—are not something a skillful counselor can talk you out of. They are part of your human nature.

Counseling can be helpful in many areas, but it cannot overcome the basic needs built into us for trust, for justice, and for love.

In a marriage, there can be no loopholes. Why? Because with people who belong together, none are needed.

Wayne & Tamara

Write: Directanswers@WayneAndTamara.com

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