



STURDY Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the study being done?

Falls are the leading cause of injuries and a major cause of hospitalizations in older adults. Some studies suggest that taking a vitamin D supplement might reduce the risk of falling; other studies suggest that vitamin D supplements have no effect on falls; and a few studies suggest that high doses of vitamin D may increase the risk of falls. This study is being done to find out if vitamin D can help prevent falls and figure out what dose of vitamin D is best.

Four vitamin D doses (200, 1000, 2000, 4000 International Units (IU) per day) will be tested.

Who can participate in the STURDY study?

If you are age 70 or older and meet these additional eligibility criteria, you might be eligible to join STURDY:

- Have a vitamin D blood level between 10 – 25 ng/ml (we will test for this)
- Have had a fall in the past year or are concerned about falling
- Are able to walk (using a cane or a walker is okay)
- Live in a community (not in assisted living or a nursing home)
- Take no more than 1000 IU per day of vitamin D supplements AND agree not to change your usual dose during the study
- Take no more than 1200 mg of calcium supplements per day
- Have not had a kidney stone in the last year AND not more than one kidney stone in your life
- Are not allergic to lactose (lactose intolerance is okay)

How will my information be used?

You will be asked questions about your health and lifestyle. We will also collect blood and urine samples for lab testing. Your personal information will be kept completely confidential. Data from the study will be published in scientific magazines or journals without revealing your personal information.

Will my health information be kept private?

Yes, we have rules to protect information about you. We will use a study number and a code instead of your name on your tests and questionnaires. The link between your name and study number and code will be known only at the site where you enroll. All paper records, such as questionnaires, will be kept in locked cabinets or in locked offices at your STURDY site.

Your test results and questionnaires, including your date of birth will be recorded on study forms, entered into a study computer file that will be sent to the STURDY Data Coordinating Center in Baltimore, MD.

Why does the study need to collect my blood?

We collect blood at the screening visit to determine whether you are eligible to be a participant in the study. Your blood vitamin D level must be low and your blood calcium level must not be either too high or too low in order to be a participant.

During the study at the clinic visits we will continue to collect your blood to make sure that your blood calcium level does not become either too high or too low and that it is safe for you to continue to take the vitamin D pills.

With your permission, the study would also like to collect blood for future research on vitamin D and falls and for genetic testing related to vitamin D and falls.

Will I be given any results from the study?

Yes, during the study, we will provide you with the results of your blood pressure testing and height and weight. At the end of study, after the last participant has completed their visits, we will distribute more information, along with a copy of the main results paper from the study.

What happens with my usual care provider if I join the study?

You will continue to see your primary care provider while you are participating in STURDY. With your permission, we will let your primary care provider know that you are part of the study. If you are not eligible to participate in STURDY and if you agree, we will send the results of your blood vitamin D and calcium tests to your primary care provider. If you join STURDY and your blood calcium tests become either too high or too low during the study, we will contact your primary care provider with that information.

Is there parking at the study centers?

Yes there is ample free parking in both Hagerstown and Gwynn Falls study centers.

Will I be compensated?

Study participants are volunteers. We provide small gifts of appreciation during the study to show our gratitude for your contribution. There is no monetary compensation, however.

Who is leading STURDY?

The study is being led by Dr. Lawrence Appel, MD, MPH, Professor of Medicine at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Dr. Appel is an internist who is keenly interested in preventing disease and disability. For nearly 30 years, he has conducted clinical research studies. Many studies, such as the DASH clinical trial, have been very influential and have guided health care policy.

The study is being funded by the National Institute on Aging (NIA) and the Office of Dietary Supplements of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Johns Hopkins University is the sponsor.

How can I refer someone else?

Please spread the word about STURDY. Our brochure and flier are available for download under the “Ways you can help tab.” Or friends or family can contact STURDY directly through our website on the HOME page [[link](#)].

What happens if I have a fall?

If you have a fall and no one is nearby call 911 for help. If you someone is able to help you up it is important to assess the injuries you may have had – did you hit your head or does anything hurt (hip, leg, arm?). Also, it is important to keep track of the circumstances by which you fell – were you standing, walking, getting up? Did you black out, feel dizzy, faint? Be sure to contact a health professional as soon as possible for a more thorough assessment. We will ask you about your fall at your next study visit.

Can I leave town during the study?

Yes. We just need you to come back for study sessions at about 3 months, 12 months, and 24 months after the first study visit.