



THE MINORITY REPORT

The Higher Risk Posed by Covid-19 in BAME Populations and Potential Nutrition and Supplement Solutions

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People of black and minority ethnic (BAME) heritage are at greater risk from Covid-19, with a death rate up to 3.5 times greater than the Caucasian population.

BAME populations may have an increased risk of exposure to the coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) and infection with Covid-19 due to commonly experienced social and economic factors. These include holding key worker roles, living within extended families and living in densely populated areas.

Obesity and type 2 diabetes are identified risk factors for severe illness and death following infection with Covid-19.

BAME populations in the UK have the highest incidence of obesity and an increased risk and incidence of type 2 diabetes.

Low vitamin D status may be a potential contributor to vulnerability to Covid-19.

Vitamin D has a crucial role in the correct functioning of the immune system and in reducing accidental (cytokine-mediated) damage to the lungs during chest infections.

All members of BAME populations are at a high risk of a chronic insufficiency of vitamin D.

There are many challenges to making enough vitamin D naturally in the UK:

- the sun is strong enough for only 5 months of the year (April to August),
- the sun reaches the right angle for only 5 hours of the day (11am to 4pm),
- skin must be exposed to direct sunlight (no clothing, glass or sunblock),
- older skin makes less vitamin D (up to 60% less in a given length of time),
- more pigmented skin makes significantly less vitamin D (as much as 90% less in a given length of time).

The typical Western diet makes it impossible to 'eat your way out of' a deficiency. Supplementing vitamin D (1000 - 4000IU) all year round may be the only viable option for people of BAME heritage living in the UK.

The 'stress-busting' mineral magnesium is needed to convert pre-vitamin D to its active form. It also helps the body use vitamin D effectively, and supports its actions in the immune system.

The average Western diet is low in magnesium. Magnesium-rich foods include almonds, beans, broccoli, cashews, egg yolk, flaxseed, green vegetables, milk, mushroom, sesame seeds, fermented tofu and whole grains. Supplementing magnesium (300 - 420mg) during challenging times will contribute to maintaining healthy levels and support vitamin D in its immune activity.