

Doctor questions congressman's health recommendations

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PHOENIX (3TV/CBS5) -- At least one Valley doctor questioned the scientific basis that exposing your stomach to direct sunlight and taking zinc supplements will safely boost your immune system. This comes after Congressman Paul Gosar suggested that people practice those two methods to stay healthy.

"Right now I'd have to say that the science doesn't support a lot of these claims," Dr. Frank LoVecchio said Monday after viewing a video of the congressman posted online.

Over the weekend, Gosar recommended several methods as a way to stay healthy that included getting rest, eating a healthy diet and exposing your "belly" to the sun for 10 to 15 minutes to boost vitamin D. He also recommended zinc supplements.

LoVecchio said too much sun increases the risk of skin cancer and taking too much zinc can come with medical problems. "There are many patients that we see that are actually zinc toxic and they get certain blood issues if they take too much zinc, so I would strongly discourage it," he said.

However, one dermatologist says 10 to 15 minutes of direct sunlight is a relatively safe method, even if it does come with some risk. "Of course there is a slightly increased risk of skin cancer but I think 8 to 15 minutes is not dangerous by any means," said Dr. Nancy Kim.

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