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Vitamin D Prevention of deficiency

This leaflet tells you why Vitamin D is important for health, why it's hard to get enough from sunlight and why taking supplements is advised



Information for relatives and carers

Why do I need Vitamin D?

Vitamin D is an essential nutrient needed for healthy bones, teeth and muscles and to control the amount of calcium in our blood. There is recent evidence that it may prevent many other diseases.

How do I get enough Vitamin D?

Only a few natural foods such as oily fish and eggs contain significant amounts of Vitamin D.

A few foods, for example breakfast cereals and margarine, are fortified with small amounts.

All formula milks are fortified but cow's milk and breast milk contain very little Vitamin D. Overall, less than 10% of our intake of Vitamin D is from our diet.

The main source is sunlight which produces Vitamin D in our skin.

However in the UK between October and March the sun's UVB rays are not strong enough to produce Vitamin D. Sunscreen, whilst protecting the skin from burning, reduces Vitamin D production.

Vitamin D supplementation is therefore recommended.

Prevention of Vitamin D deficiency

All children and young people living in the UK should take a daily Vitamin D supplement throughout the year, particularly in the winter months.

Public Health England advice based on 'Vitamin D and Health Report', SACN, 2016.

Vitamin D supplementation

One International Unit (IU) is equivalent to 0.025 g Vitamin D as cholecalciferol or ergocalciferol.

Birth to 1 year	7.5–10µg/day = 300-400 IU Maximum dose 25µg/day
Supplements available from most pharmacies and supermarkets	Multivitamin drops containing Vitamin D Abidec, Dalivit, Healthy Start vitamins* Vit D drops eg Baby D drops Oral spray DLuxInfant spray (7.5µg per spray, up to age of 3)
1 – 18 years	10–25 µg/day = 400–1000 IU Maximum dose 100µg/day
Supplements available from most pharmacies and supermarkets	Vitamin D 25 µg/day as tablets or oral spray Sainsbury's Vitamin D, Tesco Vitamin D, Asda Vitamin D, Boots Vitamin D Holland & Barrett Vitamin D3, SunVitD3 1000IU, Vitabiotics Ultra Vitamin D3, Animal Parade Vitamin D3 DLux 1000 oral spray, Dr Mercola Vitamin D Sunshine Mist

Always read label to ensure product is suitable for the child's age

*Children eligible for NHS Healthy Start scheme can obtain free vitamin drops by taking their coupons to a local distribution point. See <https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk> for details.

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