

Vitamin D and COVID-19 update

Vitamin D

- Public Health England advises that everyone needs vitamin D equivalent to an average daily intake of 10micrograms (400 international units) to protect bone and muscle health.
- All adults and children over 5 years old are recommended to take a daily vitamin D supplements containing 10 micrograms throughout autumn and winter.
- Public Health England advises that people at risk of vitamin D deficiency should take supplements of 10 microgram daily all year round;
People at risk include;
 - Those spending large amounts of time indoors e.g. frail, housebound, in a care home.
 - Those who usually wear clothes that cover up most of their skin when outdoors.
 - People with dark skin e.g. African, African-Caribbean or south Asian background
- Breastfed babies from birth to 1 year of age should be given a daily supplement containing 8.5 to 10 micrograms of vitamin D. Formula-fed babies will be receiving vitamin D from their fortified infant formula so should not require vitamin D supplements unless they are having less than 500ml a day..
- Children aged 1 to 4 years old should be given a daily supplement containing 10 micrograms of vitamin D.

Vitamin D and COVID-19

- There is no evidence to support taking vitamin D supplements to specifically prevent or treat COVID-19.
- UK Government advice during the COVID-19 pandemic is that everyone should consider taking 10 micrograms of vitamin D a day because they might not be getting enough from sunlight if they're indoors most of the day shielding or self-isolating. Vitamin D for this purpose should be bought from a Pharmacy or shop.

Purchasing Vitamin D

- Vitamin D should not routinely be prescribed other than for some long-term conditions or patients with risk factors for bone disease.
- Vitamin D is available at most supermarkets and can be picked up during the weekly shop at a low cost.
- Vitamin D can also be purchased from health food shops, community pharmacies and online from reputable websites.
- Preparations containing 1000 units (25 micrograms) are considerably cheaper to purchase than those containing 400 units (10 micrograms) or 800 units (20 micrograms) and are suitable for maintenance.

- Pregnant women and families with children under 4 years old may qualify for free Healthy Start vitamins. For further information visit:
<https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/healthy-start-vouchers/healthy-start-vitamins>
- Community Pharmacists are available to provide further advice if necessary.

Other sources of vitamin D

- We get most of our vitamin D from sunlight exposure. Our body creates vitamin D from direct sunlight on our skin when we're outdoors.
- Vitamin D is found in a small number of foods;
 - oily fish, such as salmon, mackerel and trout
 - egg yolks
 - red meat and offal
 - 'fortified foods' – margarines, cereals, infant formula milk

References

<https://www.nice.org.uk/advice/es28/chapter/Advisory-statement-on-likely-place-in-therapy>

[https://www.gov.uk/government/news/phe-publishes-new-advice-on-vitamin-d#:~:text=PHE%20is%20advising%20that%2010,healthy%20bones%2C%20teeth%20and%20muscles.&text=To%20protect%20bone%20and%20muscle,\(Thursday%2021%20July%202016\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/phe-publishes-new-advice-on-vitamin-d#:~:text=PHE%20is%20advising%20that%2010,healthy%20bones%2C%20teeth%20and%20muscles.&text=To%20protect%20bone%20and%20muscle,(Thursday%2021%20July%202016))

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vitamins-and-minerals/vitamin-d>

<https://www.shropshireccg.nhs.uk/health-advice/self-care/vitamin-d/>