



NHS

*Ipswich and East Suffolk
Clinical Commissioning Group*

Self-care information on Vitamin D

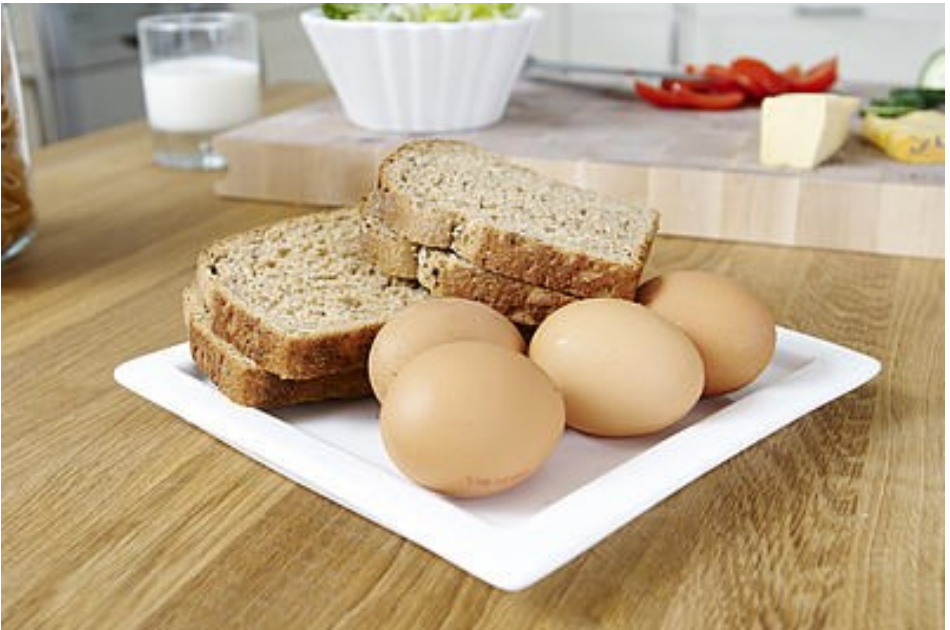


Why do we need vitamin D?

Vitamin D is important for good health, growth and strong bones.

A mild lack of vitamin D may not cause any symptoms.

Very low levels of vitamin D can cause more serious problems such as bone pain and tenderness as a result of a condition called osteomalacia.



Your body makes vitamin D from the action of sunlight on your skin. Short daily periods (10 to 15 minutes) of sun exposure without sunscreen during the summer months (April to October) are enough for most people to make enough vitamin D. The most effective time of day for vitamin D production is between 11am and 3pm.

Never allow your skin to start going red or burn in the sun. Take care to cover up or protect your skin with sunscreen before you turn red or get burnt. You do not need a tan to make vitamin D.

Winter sunlight in the UK is not strong enough to allow the body to make vitamin D. From November to March we get vitamin D from our body's stores and from food sources

Vitamin D is found in a small number of foods, for example: oily fish such as salmon, sardines and mackerel; eggs; margarine and fortified breakfast cereals.

Do I need vitamin D supplement?

Most people should be able to get all the vitamin D they need by eating a healthy balanced diet and by getting some sun in the spring and summer months. However in autumn and winter months it may be difficult to get enough vitamin D, as it is difficult for you to meet the 400 IU (10mcg) recommendation from your diet alone. Therefore Public Health England has asked people to consider taking a daily supplement containing 400 IU (10mcg) of Vitamin D in autumn and winter.

There are some groups of people who are more at risk of not getting enough vitamin D in summer months also, they are:

- Pregnant and breastfeeding women
- Babies and children younger than five years old
- People aged 65 years and over
- People who are not exposed to much sun, such as people who cover up their skin when outdoors or those who are housebound or confined indoors for long periods
- People who have darker skin such as people of African, African-Caribbean and South Asian origin.

Current recommendations are that this group of people aged **65 years and over**, people who are **not exposed to much sun** and all **pregnant and breastfeeding** women should take a daily supplement containing 400IU (10 mcg) of vitamin D. Even if you do not fit into one of these groups, your GP may advise you to take a vitamin D supplement if they feel you could become low on vitamin D.

Children under 5 years are also recommended to take a daily supplement of vitamin D. Your health visitor will be able to advise you on whether your child needs vitamin D drops and which products are most suitable for them.

Vitamin D supplements can be bought from many high street shops and supermarkets. Some examples of products that meet the adult requirements and are available to purchase can be found on the next page.

In some cases, your GP may decide to do a blood test to check your vitamin D levels. If this test shows your vitamin D levels are a bit low, your GP may recommend that you purchase vitamin D supplements. Your GP should tell you which dose of vitamin D you should take.



Examples of vitamin D products available for adults to purchase

Always check the amount of vitamin D contained in the supplement matches your requirements. If you are unsure ask your pharmacist or GP for advice.

Approximate price	Source	Suitability
Boots Pharmaceuticals Vitamin D 400IU (10mcg) tablets		
90 tablets £2.19	Available in store and online from Boots www.boots.com	Suitable for vegetarians but not vegans
Tesco Vitamin D 500IU (12.5mcg) tablets		
90 tablets £2.75	Available in store and online from Tesco	Suitable for vegetarians but not vegans
Deva Vegan Vitamin D 800IU (20mcg) tablets		
90 tablets £5.95	Available for purchase online	Suitable for vegetarians and vegans
Holland and Barrett Sunvite D3 Fast acting liquid 1000IU (25mcg)/10drops		
59mls £13.99	Available in store and online from Holland and Barrett www.hollandand-barrett.com	Suitable for vegetarians but not vegans
Boots Pharmaceuticals Vitamin D3 1000IU (25mcg) tablets		
90 tablets £4.99	Available in store and online from Boots www.boots.com	Suitable for vegetarians but not vegans
<p>Products containing calcium AND vitamin D that are more suitable for those aged over 65 years:</p>		
Calcichew D3 Forte Vitamin D 400IU (10mcg) and calcium carbonate 1.25g tablets		
60 chewable tablets £4.24	Available to buy from pharmacies	Suitable for vegetarians but not vegans
Calceos Vitamin D 400IU (10mcg) and calcium carbonate 1.25g tablets		
60 chewable tablets £3.58	Available to buy from pharmacies	Not suitable for people with peanut/soya allergy or vegetarians and vegans

Approximate price	Source	Suitability
<p>Healthy Start Vitamins for pregnant women Contains vitamin D 400IU (10mcg) (Also contains vitamin C and folic acid)</p>		
56 tablets free of charge where eligible; £1.15 for purchase	Available from midwives, health visitors and childrens centres and also some pharmacies. For more information visit www.healthystart.nhs.uk	Suitable for vegetarians but not vegans
<p>PregnaCare multivitamins and minerals Contain vitamin D 400IU (10mcg) (Also contains multiple other constituents)</p>		
90 tablets Prices from approx. £11.69	Various supermarkets, chemists and online	Suitable for vegetarians but not vegans
<p>Sanatogen Mum to Be multivitamins and minerals Contain vitamin D 400IU (10mcg) (Also contains multiple other constituents)</p>		
90 tablets Prices from approx. £14.20	Various supermarkets, chemists and online	Suitable for vegetarians but not vegans

If you need any further information:

- Ask your pharmacist
- NHS Choices - www.nhs.uk
- Patient UK - www.patient.co.uk

If you would like this information in another language or another format, including audio tape, braille or large print, please call 01473 770 014.

Jeżeli potrzebujesz pomocy w zrozumieniu tych informacji w swoim języku zadzwoń na podany poniżej numer.

Polish

Se precisar de ajuda para ler estas informações em outra língua, por favor telefone para o número abaixo.

Portuguese

Jeigu jums reikia suprasi šia, informacija, kita kalba prašom skambinti šiuo numeriu apačioje

Lithuanian

এই লেখাটি যদি অন্য ভাষায় বুঝতে চান তাহলে নিচের নম্বরে ফোন করুন

Bengali

ئەگەر پێویست بە پارمەتی هەیە یۆ تێگەیشتنی ئەم زانیاریانە بە زمانێکی تر تکایە پەیوەندی بە ژمارەى خوارەوه بکە

Kurdish

如果你需要其他語言來幫助你了解這些資訊，請撥以下電話。


Chinese

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