



## Self-Care Information on Vitamin D The sunshine vitamin

### Why do we need vitamin D?

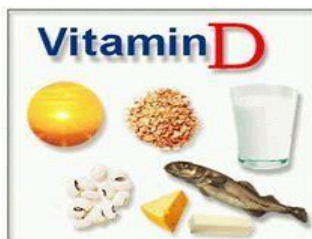
Vitamin D helps to regulate the amount of calcium and phosphate in the body. It helps to keep bones, teeth and muscles healthy.

### Sources of Vitamin D

#### Safe sun exposure

The vitamin is made by our body under the skin in reaction to sunlight. Exposing commonly uncovered areas of the skin (such as the forearms and hands) for short periods when in strong sunlight March/April to the end of September provides vitamin D. Longer periods of exposure may be needed for those with darker skin.

#### Dietary intake of Vitamin D



Rich sources of vitamin D include:

Oily fish (salmon, mackerel, and sardines), egg yolk, red meat, liver, mushrooms, and fortified foods (such as fat spreads and some breakfast cereals and yoghurts)

### Supplementation

It's difficult for people to get enough vitamin D from food alone; everyone (including pregnant and breastfeeding women) should consider taking a daily supplement during the autumn and winter

#### People at risk of vitamin D deficiency

Some people are at high risk of vitamin D deficiency because they have little or no sunshine exposure. **You should take a daily supplement throughout the year if you:**

- are not often outdoors – for example, if you're frail or housebound
- are in a live in setting such as a care home
- usually wear clothes that cover up most of your skin when outdoors
- have dark skin



You can purchase your own Vitamin D supplements to take daily from a wide range of supermarkets, health food shops and pharmacies. You should take between 400 units to 1000 units daily (10 micrograms to 25 micrograms).

#### For Further Information

Contact your local pharmacist

NHS choices – [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

Patient UK - [www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)