

Vitamin D is essential for healthy bones, and we get most of our vitamin D from exposure to sunlight. Find out how to make sure you get enough without risking sun damage.



Everyone needs vitamin D to absorb calcium and phosphorus from their diet. These minerals are important for healthy bones. A lack of vitamin D (known as vitamin D deficiency) can cause softening and weakening of bones and lead to bone deformities. In children, for example, lack of vitamin D can lead to rickets. In adults, lack of vitamin D can lead to osteomalacia, which causes bone pain and tenderness.

### Where do I get vitamin D?

You get most of your vitamin D from sunlight on your skin. This is because the vitamin forms under your skin in reaction to sunlight. Vitamin D is also found in a small number of foods, including:

oily fish

eggs

fortified foods that have had vitamin D added to them, such as low fat spreads, breakfast cereals and powdered milk

Cover up or protect your skin before it starts to turn red or burn

### Who is at risk of vitamin D deficiency?

Most people can get all the vitamin D they need by eating a healthy, balanced diet and getting a little sun. However, the Department of Health recommends a daily vitamin D supplement for the following people:

- All children aged six months to four years (see below)
- All pregnant and breastfeeding women
- All people aged 65 and over
- People who aren't exposed to much sun, for example people who cover up their skin for cultural reasons, or people who are housebound (stay indoors) for long periods of time



For more information, help and support go to [www.choosewellmanchester.org.uk](http://www.choosewellmanchester.org.uk) or visit NHS Choices at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

**Choose the right care**

## Vitamin D and babies and children

If you are exclusively breastfeeding your baby you should give your baby a daily vitamin D supplement from six months of age.

If your baby is fed with infant formula, you should give them a daily vitamin D supplement if they are drinking less than 500ml (one pint) of formula a day.



- If you are breastfeeding your baby and giving them infant formula as well, they will need a daily vitamin D supplement from six months of age, or if they are drinking less than 500ml (one pint) of formula a day.
- You should continue to give your child a vitamin D supplement until they are four years old.
- If you qualify, you can get vitamin drops containing vitamin D free from Healthy Start vitamins.

## What to do next...



**Choose care at home if...**

- You and your family have a healthy balanced diet
- You and your family are able to safely enjoy sunlight during the summer months



**Choose your Health Visitor or GP if...**

- You are concerned about the level of vitamin D you get from the sun and your diet
- They can advise if you need a vitamin D supplement



**Call 999 A&E if...**

- There are no reasons why you should need to go to A&E for help with vitamin D
- A&E is for urgent, life-threatening illness and injury



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