

vitamin **D**

Are you getting what you need?



Vitamin D needs through the lifecycle

(IU= International Units)

Infants

Infants to 1 year || 400 IU/day

Children & Adults

1 year to 70 years || 600 IU/day

Seniors

Over 70 years || 800 IU/day

Pregnant and Breastfeeding women

|| 600 IU/day

We need vitamin D to help our bodies use calcium and phosphorous for strong bones and teeth.

Too little vitamin D can cause calcium and phosphorous levels in the blood to decrease. This can cause rickets in children and osteomalacia (softening of the bones) or osteoporosis (fragile bones) in adults.

There are three sources of vitamin D...

 **Sunlight**

 **Food**

 **Supplement**



Sunlight

Vitamin D is often called the ‘sunshine’ vitamin, because our skin is able to make the vitamin when exposed to the sun.

BUT sunscreen, clothing, dark winter months, overcast weather and being indoors can stop the sun’s rays from reaching your skin. If you are practicing sun safety – you may not be absorbing vitamin D. The amount of vitamin D that your body can make from sunlight also depends on your age, where you live and your skin tone.

Do not depend on sunshine to meet your vitamin D needs.



Sources:

Health Link BC:
www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthfile/pdf/hfile68e.pdfpdf

Dietitians of Canada:
www.dietitians.ca/Your-Health/Nutrition-A-Z/Vitamins/Vitamin-D-What-you-need-to-know.aspx

Health Canada:
www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/vitamin/vita-d-eng.php

Vitamin D Council:
www.vitamindcouncil.org/health-conditions/depression/

Food Sources of Vitamin D



Food	Serving Size	Amount of Vitamin D
Milk (2%, 1%, skim, chocolate) *	1 cup	104 IU
Fortified soy beverage *	1 cup	88 IU
Fortified rice, oat, almond beverage	1 cup	88 IU
Orange juice, fortified with vitamin D	½ cup	50 IU
Egg yolk, cooked	2 large	70 IU
Salmon, Atlantic, cooked	75 g	246 IU
Salmon, Sockeye, canned	75 g	557 IU
Sardines, Pacific, canned	75 g	144 IU
Trout, cooked	75 g	150 IU
Tuna, white, canned with water	75 g	60 IU
Cod liver oil	1 tsp	427 IU

Foods and beverages that have added vitamin D are excellent sources of vitamin D.

Always check the label on packaged foods. You know vitamin D has been added if you see “fortified” or “enriched” on the label.

Local fish such as salmon and lake trout are also excellent sources of vitamin D.

**Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide recommends that all Canadians over the age of two, including pregnant and lactating women, consume 500mL (two cups) of milk or fortified soy beverages every day. These foods are fortified with vitamin D.*

Tips for getting more vitamin D through healthy eating

Milk and Alternatives

- Use milk or fortified soy beverage instead of water when making pancakes, muffins, soups, puddings, smoothies and sauces
- Make a yogurt parfait for breakfast with yogurt, fruit and nuts (check the label to see if the yogurt has vitamin D)
- Make hot chocolate with milk instead of water
- Add milk to coffee instead of whitener

Meat and Alternatives

- Try smoked salmon on crackers or in a wrap
- Add sardines to pizza or appetizers
- Make scrambled eggs with added milk
- Try canned salmon in a wrap or sandwich
- Put local fish such as salmon or lake trout on the dinner menu

Check out the Nutrition Facts table on food labels to see if a packaged food has vitamin D. A food has a lot of vitamin D if it has at least 15% Daily Value (DV) of vitamin D per serving.

Do I need a supplement?

It is difficult to get enough vitamin D through food alone. You can take a vitamin D supplement or a multivitamin with vitamin D in it.



Infants

All breastfed, healthy term babies should receive a daily vitamin D supplement of 400IU until the diet provides adequate vitamin D. Infants who are exclusively formula-fed do not need a vitamin D supplement since vitamin D is already added to formula.

A single vitamin D3 supplement (without other vitamins) in a liquid (drop) format is recommended for infants. Other vitamin D products such as vitamin D2 or a multivitamin (which contains vitamin D) are not recommended for infants.

Adults over 50 years

Health Canada recommends that adults over 50 years take a supplement of 400 IU/day in addition to vitamin D in the diet.

I can only find vitamin D in 400IU or 1000IU. How do I know which one to buy?

The Tolerable Upper Intake Level (UL) for vitamin D is 4000 IU for adults. Total vitamin D intake from food and supplements should remain below the UL. Meaning, it is safe to consume 1000 IU of vitamin D daily year round.