

VITAMIN D DEFICIENCY

GENERAL INFORMATION:

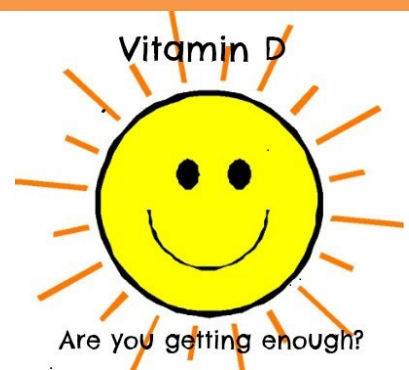
What is vitamin D deficiency?

Vitamin D deficiency is a low level of vitamin D in your body. Vitamin D helps your body absorb calcium from foods. Your body makes vitamin D when your skin is exposed to sunlight. You can also get vitamin D from certain foods such as fish, eggs, and meat. Most of the vitamin D in your body comes from sunlight exposure. Broadly speaking this can occur in three situations:

- The body has an increased need for vitamin D.
- The body is unable to make enough vitamin D.
- Not enough vitamin D is being taken in the diet

What increases my risk for vitamin D deficiency?

- Low amount of sun exposure
- Low intake of foods that contain vitamin D
- Having dark skin
- Age older than 65
- Pregnancy or breastfeeding
- Infants who are breastfed
- Inability to absorb vitamin D from food
- Obesity
- Use of certain medicines such as anti-seizure, steroid, or antifungal medicines.



What are the signs and symptoms of vitamin D deficiency?

You may not have any signs and symptoms, or you may have any of the following:

- Bone pain or discomfort in your lower back, pelvis, or legs
- Muscle aches and weakness
- Low back pain in women
- Poor growth, irritability, and frequent respiratory tract infections in infants
- Deformed bones and slow growth in children

How is vitamin D deficiency diagnosed and treated?

Blood tests will be done to measure the amount of vitamin D in your blood. Your doctor may give you high doses of vitamin D for 8 to 12 weeks to increase your levels. Your levels will then be rechecked. If your levels are still low, you will need to take vitamin D supplements for another 8 weeks. After your levels have gone back to normal, you may need to continue to take a vitamin D supplement.

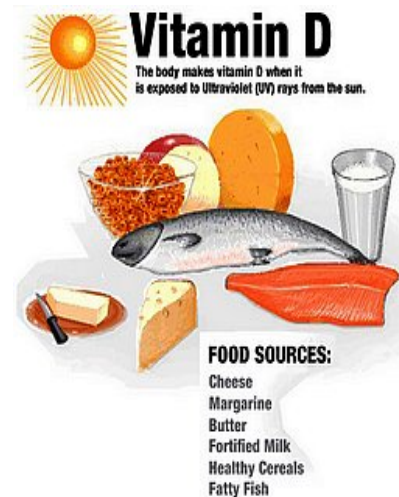
How much vitamin D do I need each day?

The amount of vitamin D you need depends on your age. You may need more than the recommended amounts below if you take certain medicines or you are obese.

- Infants up to 1 year of age: 400 international units (IU)
- Children 1 year and older: 600 IU
- Adults aged 19 to 70 years old: 600 IU
- Adults older than 70 years: 800 IU

How can I help prevent vitamin D deficiency?

- Eat foods that are high in vitamin D. Fatty fish sardines, and salmon are good sources of vitamin D. certain foods such as milk, juice, and cereal are fortified with vitamin D.
- Give your breastfed infant a vitamin D supplement of 400 IU each day.
- Take vitamin D supplements as directed. High doses of vitamin D can be toxic. Your doctor will tell you how much vitamin D you should take each day. Vitamin D is best absorbed when taken with food.
- Expose your skin to sunlight as directed. Ask your doctor how you can safely expose your skin to sunlight and for how long. Too much exposure to sunlight can cause skin cancer.



When should I contact my healthcare provider?

- You or your child still has symptoms, or your symptoms get worse.
- You think you took too much of a vitamin D supplement, and you have nausea, vomiting, or a headache.
- You have questions or concerns about your condition or care.

What are side effects of vitamin D deficiency?

Vitamin D at normal doses usually has no side effects.

- Taking vitamin D for long periods of time in doses higher than 4000 units daily is possibly unsafe.
- Tell your doctor right away if any of these signs: nausea, vomiting, constipation, loss of appetite, increased thirst, increased urination, mood changes.
- A very serious allergic reaction to this drug is rare

What are the cautions when taking vitamin D supplements?

Vitamin D should not be taken by people who have:

- Hypersensitivity to cholecalciferol, ergocalciferol, or vitamin D metabolites (eg, calcitriol, calcifediol, alfalcidol, calcipotriol)
- Hypercalcemia (exacerbation with enhanced toxicity)
- Hypervitaminosis D