



VITAMIN D SUPPLEMENTATION

Vitamin D deficiency affects the health of infants, children, and adolescents adversely, causing conditions such as growth failure and a bone disease called rickets. Adequate levels of vitamin D may help reduce the risk of autoimmune diseases, infections, and type 2 diabetes.

The body makes Vitamin D when skin is exposed to the ultraviolet light (UVB rays) from the sun. Limiting sun exposure and the use of sunscreen to protect skin from damage caused by the sun interferes with this process. Also, the greater amounts of pigment in darker skin reduces the skin's ability to produce vitamin D from sunlight.

Obtaining sufficient vitamin D from natural food sources alone is difficult.

Infants should be receiving 400 IU of Vitamin D daily.

Human breast milk contains very little vitamin D.

Exclusively breast-fed infants and infants who are ingesting less than 32 ounces of Vitamin D-fortified formula should be given a daily supplement starting in the first month of life.

After their first birthday, the RDA is 600 IU of Vitamin D each day.

Vitamin D enriched foods are another way to increase the vitamin D in your child's diet. Look for foods fortified with vitamin D such as milk (1 cup may provide 115 IU), cereal, and yogurt.

Vitamin D is found naturally in only a few foods --- they include oily fish, beef, liver, cheese, egg yolks, and some mushrooms. Oily (or fatty) fish are one of the best sources of the vitamin. For example, 3.5 ounces of cooked salmon offers approximately 360 IU (about 90 percent of your child's daily recommended value) of vitamin D per serving. Other examples of oily fish include tuna, mackerel, trout, herring, sardines, kipper, anchovies, carp, and orange roughy.

The USDA National Nutrients Database (www.nal.usda.gov) and food labels are the best resources for more information.

Children who are not getting enough Vitamin D from dietary sources should be given a daily supplement.

Vitamin D supplements for the first year of life: Carlson Baby D drops, D-Vi-Sol, Tri-Vi-Sol or Poly-Vi-Sol.

Vitamin D supplements after the first year of life can be in the form of drops or chewable vitamins.

