



Where We Stand: Vitamin D & Iron Supplements for Babies

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends infants be fed breast milk (also known as human milk) exclusively for the first 6 months after birth. Human milk contains a natural balance of vitamins, especially C, E and the B vitamins. So, if you and your baby are both healthy, and you are well nourished, your child may not require any supplements of these vitamins. However, breastfed infants need supplemental vitamin D.



Why do babies need vitamin D supplements?

Our bodies need sunlight to produce vitamin D, which is why exposure to sunlight is good in moderation. However, children should wear sunscreen, hats, and protective clothing when outdoors for extended periods of time to prevent sunburn and reduce the risk of skin cancer later in life. For this reason, the AAP recommends that all infants receive a vitamin D supplement (unless they are consuming more than 27 ounces per day of commercial formula that has the vitamin D supplement added).

How much vitamin D do babies need?

Vitamin D supplements of 400 IU (10 mcg) per day are recommended for babies up until age one year, with 600 IU (15 mcg) per day for children over one year. Talk to your pediatrician about supplemental vitamin D drops.

Do babies need iron supplements?

For the first four months, your breastfed baby needs no additional iron. The iron in their body at birth was enough for their initial growth. But now the reserves will be low and as their growth increases, so will their need for iron. At four months of age infants who are partially or completely breastfeeding should be supplemented with 1 mg/kg per day of oral iron until appropriate iron-containing complementary foods (including iron-fortified cereals) are introduced in their diet.

Universal screening for iron deficiency

The AAP recommends that all babies be screened at 12 months of age for iron deficiency and iron deficiency anemia. See [Anemia and Your Child: Parent FAQs \(/English/health-issues/conditions/chronic/Pages/Anemia-and-Your-Child.aspx\)](#) for more information.

If there were pregnancy or birth complications such as diabetes, low birth weight, or prematurity, or if your baby was small for gestational age and is taking breast milk, iron supplementation may start in the first month after birth. Fortunately, once you start your baby on solid foods, they'll also receive iron from meats, iron-fortified cereals and green vegetables.

More information

- [Vitamin D Deficiency and Rickets \(/English/healthy-living/nutrition/Pages/Vitamin-D-Deficiency-and-Rickets.aspx\)](#)
- [Where We Stand: Vitamins \(/English/healthy-living/nutrition/Pages/Where-We-Stand-Vitamins.aspx\)](#)

- [Tips to Reduce Arsenic in Your Baby's Diet \(/English/ages-stages/baby/feeding-nutrition/Pages/reduce-arsenic.aspx\)](#) [Back to Top](#)
- [Dietary Supplements for Toddlers \(/English/ages-stages/toddler/nutrition/Pages/Dietary-Supplements-for-Toddlers.aspx\)](#)

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