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Their benefits have long been debated but new research has found that vitamin D supplements can in fact help stave off colds and flu. Experts say more than three million people across the UK could avoid infections by taking tablets of the so-called "sunshine vitamin", particularly during winter. Ruth Liptrot has been finding out more. Vitamin D has long been known as the sunshine vitamin, good for our bone and muscle health. So we know that getting enough of it can make us feel like this. And that not getting enough of it during the darker months can make us feel like this. But the latest research goes even further, saying that it helps to protect us from coughs and colds too. Public Health England say we should be getting ten micrograms of vitamin D a day. But in winter most of us don't. But according to the new research, getting the required amount

would prevent three million cases of acute respiratory infection a year. That's a lot less nose blowing. We found that the population as a whole, taking vitamin di reduces the risk of an acute respiratory infection, cold, flu, sore throat, by 10%. But if you are in one of the group who have low baseline levels, vitamin deed efficiency, risk reduction is 50%, halving your risk such an infection. So how much of it are you lot getting and do you know why you need it? Do you take vitamin D? No. What have you got against it? Nothing, I just haven't thought about it. Why do you take it? It is good for the immune system. Correct. It can prevent colds and flu and we would be less

sick if we took it. I don't get colds. Excuse me. In some countries foods like bread and milk are deliberately fortified with vitamin D. Here, you can find it in egg yolks, oily fish like mackerel or salmon, cheese, fortified orange juice, beef, liver and soya milk. Just make sure that you're getting it from somewhere so you feel less like this. And more like this.