Vitamin D: Sunshine pill WILL fight coughs and colds - Brits told take supplements

By [MARK REYNOLDS](http://www.express.co.uk/search/?s=%20Mark%20Reynolds&b=1)

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A DAILY dose of sunshine via Vitamin D pills keeps coughs and colds at bay, according to new research.

As about 15 per cent of Britons – some nine million people – battle the sniffles and sore throats this week, medics say daily doses of vitamin D could help stave off the virus that causes such common colds

A study found the old and housebound would benefit the most from taking the supplements.

Vitamin D is naturally made in the human body when we are exposed to sunlight and is also contained in foods such as oily fi sh, as well as red meat and eggs.

But it can also be taken as a daily supplement and is particularly recommended by medics during the darker winter months.

The new Britishled worldwide study now suggests taking the vitamin regularly reduces the risk of acute respiratory infections, protecting us against anything from the common cold to bronchitis and pneumonia.

Professor Adrian Martineau, who led the study at Queen Mary University London, said: “Vitamin D supplementation was safe and protected against acute respiratory tract infection overall.

"Our study reports a major new indication for vitamin D supplementation: the prevention of acute respiratory tract infection.”

Professor Carlos Camargo, of Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard University, said: “Most people understand that vitamin D is critical for bone and muscle [**health**](http://www.express.co.uk/life-style/health).

“Our analysis also found that it helps the body fight acute respiratory infection, which is responsible for millions of deaths globally each year.”

A-Z of vitamins and minerals

Acute respiratory infections lead to 300,000 hospital admissions and 35,000 deaths across Britain every year.

Last year Public Health England revealed that people were generally not getting the recommended 10 micrograms of vitamin D a day from sunlight in winter.

The study published in the British Medical Journal goes further, saying vitamin D supplements actively reduce the risk of patients experiencing at least one acute respiratory tract infection by an eighth – 12 per cent.

Those most deficient in the vitamin, particularly the old and the housebound, received the greatest health boost but even those with healthy levels saw a benefit.

In a separate study, scientists found the sunshine vitamin can also boost the strength of muscles in the elderly and the obese.

They concluded it regulates the amount of calcium and phosphate in the body, the nutrients keeping bones, teeth and muscles healthy.