

## Questions you may have:

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*Talk to a healthcare professional  
about any questions or concerns you  
have.*



## *Some foods contain vitamin D*

- Major sources of vitamin D are fortified foods such as cow's milk and margarine
- Goat's milk, fortified plant based beverages (e.g. fortified soy beverages) and some calcium-fortified orange juices may be fortified with vitamin D
- Cheese and yogurt can be made with vitamin D-fortified milk however the final product does not contain as much vitamin D as milk alone
- Natural sources of vitamin D are fatty fish, beef liver, mushrooms and egg yolks, but they contain very small amounts
- Look for food labels that show greater than 20% daily value (DV) for vitamin D per serving

### References & Information Sources

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***Understanding  
Your Health:  
What you need to  
know about  
vitamin D***

***A Guide for  
Residents &  
Families...***

## *What is vitamin D?*

Vitamin D is a nutrient that helps your body absorb calcium. Together, calcium and vitamin D help maintain the health of your body.

## *What does vitamin D do for your body?*

Vitamin D plays an important role in bone and muscle health and strength, and helps reduce the risk of fractures and falls.

It also helps fight infections, keeps your blood pressure within healthy range, and assists in controlling insulin production in the body.

## *Low levels of vitamin D*

Vitamin D deficiency impairs normal bone mineralization, leading to osteoporosis.

## *The elderly and vitamin D*

Adults over the age of 65 may not be able to produce vitamin D as well as when they were younger.

Individuals with dark skin pigmented with melanin are less likely to have the ability to make vitamin D from sunlight exposure.

Multivitamins with vitamin D provide one possible way for the elderly to ensure adequate consumption of vitamin D.



## *Available types of vitamin D*

- **Vitamin D<sub>3</sub> (cholecalciferol)** – this is the form most commonly used in supplements; it is synthesized in the skin; important nutrient involved in calcium metabolism, bone health and muscle function.
- **Vitamin D<sub>2</sub> (ergocalciferol)** - plant-based derivative, an option for vegetarians.
- **Calcitriol** – available by prescription only; it is one of the active forms of vitamin D in the body; used in patients with kidney disease who are unable to convert vitamin D<sub>3</sub> to calcitriol.

## *What is the daily recommended intake (DRI)?*

Maintenance range for adults is 400 IU – 2,000 IU daily. It is not recommended to exceed 4000 IU per day if you are over 70 years of age.

## *High levels of vitamin D*

High levels of vitamin D may cause high calcium levels which may result in side effects like nausea, vomiting, poor appetite, and weakness.

More serious health problems (e.g. kidney stones, deposits in organs and soft tissues) can occur if an individual is taking high levels of vitamin D supplements along with calcium supplements.

These side effects are not seen from vitamin D naturally synthesized through the skin or by eating foods rich in vitamin D.

## *Supplements and sources*

Sunlight, foods fortified with vitamin D, and vitamin supplements are common sources.

Vitamin D<sub>3</sub> comes in many forms: pills, chewable tablets and liquid formulations. The choice is yours on which form to take!