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# Vitamin D Basics

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## What is Vitamin D?

Known as the "Sunshine Vitamin," it is made in the body by sunlight on the skin. People that spend most of the time indoors must get Vitamin D from artificial light or Vitamin D rich diets and Vitamin D supplements.



## Why do I need Vitamin D?

Vitamin D helps maintain bone health by promoting calcium absorption and maintaining adequate amounts of calcium and phosphorus for bone growth and bone replacement. Recent research has also found that Vitamin D also helps control conditions such as: diabetes, high blood pressure, and muscle weakness.

## Am I at risk of Vitamin D deficiency?

There is no way to know for certain until you get a Vitamin D test. Even healthy people should seek a doctor and have their Vitamin D level tested.

You are at higher risk for vitamin D deficiency if you are:

- Elderly
- Have little sun exposure
- Dark skin
- Obese
- Fat malabsorptive disorders
- Inflammatory bowel disease

Find out what your Vitamin D level is by having a Vitamin D 25 (OH) D test by your doctor. If you have a Vitamin D deficiency, work with your doctor to increase your vitamin D level with diet, supplements and sunlight.

## How do I get enough Vitamin D?

- Receive midday sun exposure (without sun block) for 15-30 minutes in the late spring, summer and early fall, exposing as much skin as possible. Use common sense to prevent sun damage to skin, and avoid sun burns. Check with your doctor if you have a condition or take pills that advise against sun exposure.
- Take Vitamin D supplements.
- Consume foods with Vitamin D.

## How much Vitamin D is in a supplement?

- Prescription Vitamin D pill: 50,000 IU
- Over the counter Vitamin D pills: 400 – 5000 IU



## How much Vitamin D does the sun provide?

- 20-30 minutes of sunny, mid day, summer exposure: 10,000 IU

## What are food sources of Vitamin D?

There are very few food sources of Vitamin D. This makes it hard to get enough from food alone. Some foods sources of Vitamin D include:

- Salmon (sockeye): 794/3 oz. cooked
- Tuna, canned in water: 154 IU/3 oz.
- Mackerel: 388 IU/3 oz. cooked
- Milk with added Vitamin D: 115-124 IU/8 oz. cup
- Orange juice with added Vitamin D: 100 IU/8 oz cup
- Yogurt with added Vitamin D: 80 IU/6 oz.

