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# Vitamin D

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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 pills.

## Why do I need vitamin D?

Vitamin D helps bone health by promoting calcium uptake and maintaining enough calcium and phosphorus for bone growth and bone replacement. Research has also found that vitamin D helps control conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, and muscle pain/weakness.

## Am I at risk of vitamin D deficiency?

There is no way to know for certain until you get a vitamin D blood test. Even healthy people may have their vitamin D level tested.

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

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

Find out what your vitamin D level is by having a vitamin D 25 (OH) D test by your provider. If you have a vitamin D deficiency, work with your provider 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 provider if you have a condition or take pills that advise against sun exposure.
- ☀️ Take vitamin D supplements.
- ☀️ Consume foods with vitamin D.



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## ☀️ How much vitamin D is in a supplement?

- ☀️ Prescription vitamin D pill: 50,000 IU once weekly, short-term to correct vitamin deficiency
- ☀️ Over the counter vitamin D pills: 400 – 5000 IU daily for maintenance
- ☀️ Vitamin D<sub>3</sub> raises blood levels of vitamin D more than vitamin D<sub>2</sub>

## 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:

Food Source	Serving Size	Vitamin D (IU)
Salmon (sockeye)	3oz cooked	794 IU
Portabella mushrooms, exposed to ultraviolet light	½ cup chopped	488 IU
Mackerel	3oz cooked	388IU
White mushrooms, exposed to ultraviolet light	½ cup chopped	366 IU
Tuna, canned in water	3oz	154 IU
Milk with vitamin D	8oz	115-124 IU
Fortified orange juice	8oz	100 IU
Yogurt with vitamin D	6oz	80 IU