

Vitamin D for Your Child

Why is vitamin D important?

Vitamin D:

- Helps make strong bones and prevent rickets. Rickets is a softening and weakening of bones in children.
- Helps with the absorption of calcium and phosphorus.
- Helps for having a healthy heart and blood vessels.
- Research suggests that vitamin D may help prevent illness, depression and other diseases.**

How much vitamin D do children need each day?

Vitamin D is measured in international units (IU). The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends:

- Babies younger than 12 months old need 400 IU of vitamin D each day.
- Toddlers and older children need 600 IU of vitamin D each day.

What foods contain vitamin D?



Salmon

Very few foods have vitamin D **naturally**. They are:

- cod liver oil (1 Tablespoon = 1,360 IU)*
- fatty fish
 - salmon (3 ounces cooked – 570 IU)*
 - tuna (3 ounces, canned in water = 40 IU)*
 - sardines (2 sardine, canned in oil = 46 IU)*
- beef liver (3 oz cooked = 42 IU)*
- egg yolks (1 large, scrambled = 44 IU)*
- mushrooms, white, raw, sliced, exposed to UV light (1/2 cup = 366 IU)*

Vitamin D is **added (fortified)** to other foods, these include:

- infant formula (1 cup = 76 - 80 IU [check can; products vary])*
- milk, 2%, fortified (1 cup = 120 IU)*
- milk alternative (soy, almond, oat), fortified (1 cup = 100 -144 IU)*
- yogurt, plain, whole milk, fortified (approximately 1/2 cup = 31 IU)*
- ready-to-eat cereal (1 serving = 80 IU)*
- orange juices, fortified (1 cup = 80 IU)*



Milk and egg soup/Changua

Unless a child eats a little over *3 ounces* of salmon or drinks *five* 8 ounce cups of milk, it's hard to get enough vitamin D from foods. Vitamin drops or a vitamin D supplement is recommended for most people.

Does everyone need to take a vitamin D supplement?

It's important to talk with a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) or medical provider if you have questions about taking supplements.

What type of supplements should my child take?

Supplements are available in many forms. Be sure to read the label and follow the directions.

Infants: Liquid vitamin D drops are available separately or as a multi-vitamin with vitamins A, C, iron, or fluoride. Use only the dropper that comes with the product and follow the directions on the package.

Children: Chewable multivitamins with vitamin D are available. Serving size varies between brands. Follow the directions on the package.

Can't my child get enough vitamin D from sunshine?

People can make vitamin D when their skin is exposed to the sun but this is not a dependable source in Washington state. Skin makes little, if any, vitamin D in northern climates like Washington, except during the summer months. Sunscreen, which is important to use to avoid skin cancer, also impacts the amount of vitamin D people can absorb. Therefore we can't depend on making enough vitamin D to meet our daily needs.



Can my child get too much vitamin D?

Current research suggests that there is not a risk of getting too much vitamin D from a combination of sunlight, food, and vitamin supplements when used in the recommended amounts.

*U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service. [FoodData Central](#)

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