

## Vitamin D

### WHAT IS IT?

Vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin that works in concert with numerous vitamins, minerals and hormones to promote optimal bone health. Vitamin D is not only crucial for bones but also affects our immune, cardiovascular and neurological systems.

Humans have historically obtained their vitamin D through sun exposure, but recent studies suggest that many of us don't get enough sun to maintain adequate vitamin D levels. Deficiency is more widespread than originally thought.

### WHY SHOULD I CONSIDER TAKING THIS?

Your health care provider might recommend vitamin D supplements if you are at high risk, or have, any of the following:

- Bone weakness, such as osteoporosis or osteomalacia
- Cancer
- History of falls
- Autoimmune conditions
- Or are living with other chronic medical illness

You may be at higher risk for inadequate vitamin D levels if you:

- Live in a climate with limited sunlight
- Have darker skin pigmentation
- Have a disease that impairs fat absorption (e.g., Crohn's, cystic fibrosis, chronic pancreatitis)
- Are diligent with sunscreen use
- Are over 65
- Are pregnant or breastfeeding

### HOW DO I TAKE IT?

Two forms of vitamin D exist. Vitamin D3 is generally thought to be superior to vitamin D2, though some experts believe they are roughly equivalent. Vitamin D2 is made from yeast and is vegan. Vitamin D3 is generally made from lanolin from sheep's wool, though some companies use fish oil. Few foods are naturally rich in Vitamin D, though many foods in the United States and Europe, including milk and cereal, are fortified.

**DOSE:** Below are the current recommendations, as set by the Institute of Medicine. Your health care provider will recommend an appropriate dose for you.

#### Current recommendations are:

- Infants 0–6 / 7–12 months: 400 IU/day (upper limit 1000/1500)
- Children 1–3 / 4–8 / 9–18: 400–600 IU/day (upper limit 2500/3000/4000)
- Adults under 70: 600 IU/day (upper limit 4000)
- Adults over 70: 800 IU/day (upper limit 4000)



Make sure to ask your health care provider exactly how and when you should take this product. Your health care provider may suggest a blood test to measure and track your vitamin D levels.