

Vitamin D

Information for patients, parents
and carers



Leeds children's
hospital

caring about children

Why is vitamin D important?

We need it to absorb the calcium from our diets. Calcium ensures our bones, muscles and teeth are healthy and strong.

Vitamin D is known as the sunshine vitamin. The majority of the Vitamin D in our bodies comes from sunlight on our skin. So even with a healthy, balanced diet we are unlikely to get enough without spending some time outside.

We build up our stores of Vitamin D during the summer months. These stores should last throughout the winter.

Children should aim to spend time outside in the sun every day from April until September to help them build good Vitamin D stores.

However, strong sun also burns skin so we need to balance making vitamin D with being safe in the sun. Take care to cover up or protect skin with sunscreen before it turns red or gets burnt. Find out more about sun safety on the NHS website Sunscreen and sun safety - NHS (www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/sunscreen-and-sun-safety).

Where do we find Vitamin D?

- Margarine (fortified with Vitamin D by law)
- Fortified breakfast cereals
- Eggs
- Oily fish such as mackerel, pilchards, fresh tuna, salmon and sardines
- Meat
- Powdered milk (including infant formula)

Who needs to take a Vitamin D supplement?

The British Dietetic Association (link to fact sheet on the next page) recommends:

- All adults and children over the age of one should consider taking a daily supplement containing 10 micrograms (μg) of Vitamin D, especially during autumn and winter
- All babies under one year should be given a daily supplement of 8.5-10 micrograms unless they have more than 500ml of fortified formula milk per day
- Those at increased risk of Vitamin D deficiency should consider taking a supplement containing 10 micrograms of Vitamin D all year round
- At risk groups include those who spend little time outside, people with darker skin tones living in the UK or other northern climates, or those who always cover their skin when outside
- Breastfeeding mothers should also take a daily Vitamin D supplement of 10 micrograms

For further information about Vitamin D please see:

- BDA fact sheet: [Vitamin D \(www.bda.uk.com/resource/vitamin-d\)](http://www.bda.uk.com/resource/vitamin-d)
- The NHS website: www.nhs.uk/conditions/vitamins-and-minerals/vitamin-d/
- The Infant and Toddler Forum factsheet: www.infantandtoddlerforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/ITF196-Factsheet-4_7-Vitamin-D-Dec19-v1.pdf
- The healthy start scheme: www.healthystart.nhs.uk

For healthcare professionals within LTHT with access to the Intranet:

- Paediatric Vitamin D Guideline (under 18 years) for Primary and Secondary Care <http://nwww.lhp.leedsth.nhs.uk/common/guidelines/detail.aspx?ID=4198>

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If you need any further advice, please request a referral to a dietitian or contact:

Dietitian:

Telephone Number:



What did you think of your care?

Scan the QR code or visit bit.ly/nhsleedsfft

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