

Vitamin D: Information is available at

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Health/Healthy-Living/Food-Health/vitaminD>

Following recommendations from the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN), Scottish Government advice on vitamin D for all age groups has been updated as follows:

From 6 months to 1 year

Infants from 6 months to one year of age, whether exclusively or partially breastfed, should be given a daily supplement containing 8.5-10 micrograms vitamin D.

Babies fed infant formula should not be given a vitamin D supplement unless they are receiving less than 500 mls (about a pint) of formula a day because formula is fortified with vitamin D and no other supplementation is required.

* The Scottish Government is also considering advice for infants aged 0-6 months. We will update our advice for this age group shortly.

Ages 1 – 4 years

Children aged 1-4 years of age should be given a daily supplement containing 10 micrograms vitamin D.

Ages 5 years and above

Everyone age 5 years and above, including pregnant and breastfeeding women and population groups at risk of deficiency, should consume 10 micrograms of vitamin D/day.

General Recommendations

Since vitamin D is found in only a small number of foods, it might be difficult to get enough from foods alone. Therefore, everyone, including pregnant and breastfeeding women, should consider taking a daily supplement containing 10 micrograms of vitamin D.

Between April and September, the majority of people aged 5 years and above will probably obtain sufficient vitamin D from sunlight when they are outdoors. They might choose not to take a vitamin D supplement during these months.

The current guidance on sun exposure should be followed: 10–15 minutes of unprotected Scottish sun exposure is safe for all. Once sunscreen is correctly applied, vitamin D synthesis is blocked. Staying in the sun for prolonged periods without the protection of sunscreen increases the risk of skin cancer.

Some population groups (with very little or no sunshine exposure) will not obtain enough vitamin D from sunlight and are at greater risk of vitamin D deficiency. People from these groups should take a daily supplement containing 10 micrograms vitamin D throughout the year. They are:

- people who are seldom outdoors such as frail or housebound individuals and those who are confined indoors e.g. in institutions such as care homes

- people who habitually wear clothes that cover most of their skin while outdoors.
- people from minority ethnic groups with dark skin such as those of African, African-Caribbean and South Asian origin might not get enough vitamin D from sunlight in summer so they should consider taking a daily supplement containing 10 micrograms vitamin D throughout the year.
- given the uncertainty of consistent sunshine in Scotland and the risks of exposing infants 0-6 months to the sun it may be advisable for pregnant and lactating women to take a daily supplement throughout the year.

The full SACN report *Vitamin D and Health* is available www.sacn.gov.uk.

Vitamin D – Key facts

- Vitamin D is essential for good bone health.
- Vitamin D deficiency can cause Rickets in children and osteomalacia in adults. For more information on Rickets and Osteomalacia visit <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/rickets/pages/introduction.aspx>
- We get vitamin D from sunlight and some foods
- The majority of us get most of the vitamin D we need from sunlight.
- Vitamin D is found in a small number of foods but it is very difficult to get enough vitamin D from food alone.
- Sunbeds are not a recommended source of vitamin D.

Supplements

Single vitamin D supplements are widely available to buy from major supermarkets, health food stores and high street pharmacies.

If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, or have a child under 4 years of age, and are eligible for Healthy Start, you are entitled to free vitamin supplements. More information is available <https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/healthy-start-vouchers/healthy-start-vitamins/>

The current Healthy Start vitamin tablets for pregnant and lactating women contain the correct dosage. From Spring 2017, free vitamins, which include vitamin D, will be available to all pregnant women in Scotland. The current Healthy Start drops for children contain 7.5 micrograms in the recommended 5 drops per day. Parents are advised not to become concerned and continue to give this dose until the current vitamin drops are replaced by the increased dosage drops.

Further advice is available from your Health professional (Midwife, Health Visitor or Doctor).