

VITAMIN D

Sources, Measurement and Supplementation

Sources of Vitamin D

Between April and September, most of us can get the vitamin D we need through the action of the sun on our skin.

Between October and March, we need to get vitamin D from diet because the sun isn't strong enough.

The easiest way to maintain your vitamin D levels is to take a supplement.

Vitamin D is also found in a small number of foods, including:

- Oily fish such as salmon, sardines, herring,
- mackerel and fresh tuna
- Red meat
- Liver
- Egg yolks
- Fortified foods such as fat spreads and some cereals.

What is Vitamin D?

Vitamin D helps regulate the amount of calcium and phosphate in the body, which are needed to keep bones, teeth and muscles healthy.

A lack of vitamin D can lead to bone deformities such as **rickets** in children, and bone pain caused by **osteomalacia** in adults.

How much do I need?

It is recommended that everyone should consider taking a daily supplement containing 10mcg of vitamin D during Autumn and Winter.

You shouldn't take more than 100mcg a day as it could be harmful. This applies to adults, the elderly, pregnant women and children aged 11-17 years

- Children aged 1-10 years shouldn't have more than 50mcg a day.
- Infants under 12 months shouldn't have more than 25mcg a day.

Who is at risk?

Some people won't get enough vitamin D even during Spring and Summer because they have inadequate sun exposure. This includes:

- People who stay mainly indoors
- People in institutions such as care homes
- People who usually wear clothes covering most of their skin when outdoors

People with dark skin from South Asian, African or African-Caribbean backgrounds may not make enough vitamin D from the levels of sunlight we get on the Isle of Man.

People in these groups should consider taking a vitamin D supplement throughout the year.

Supplementation & Testing

Supplements are not available on NHS prescription

Vitamin D supplements are cheaply and readily available at pharmacies and supermarkets across the island.

Testing will not be offered on the NHS

A blood test to check vitamin D levels is not required before starting a supplement unless a patient shows symptoms indicating osteomalacia, rickets or hypocalcaemia.

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