

## Maintaining Vitamin D levels for adults

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### What is vitamin D?




Vitamin D is vital to your body to help keep your bones and muscles healthy. Unlike other vitamins, you only get a small amount of vitamin D from food. The main source is made in the skin by the action of sunlight.

#### Why was I prescribed a vitamin D supplement?

You have been prescribed a vitamin D supplement because of the low levels in your body. The treatment doses can be taken either daily, weekly or monthly. This will depend on your situation and on which particular treatment guideline your doctor is using. Always check with your doctor if you don't understand the instructions - with high doses of vitamin D it is important to take the medicine correctly. The advantage of the higher-dose treatment is that it improves the low levels in the body more quickly.

#### How do I maintain my vitamin D levels in the future?

After your treatment course of vitamin D, your body's stores should be replenished. The following recommendations can help you to prevent your body becoming low in vitamin D in the future:

-  **Get regular exposure to sunlight.** Try to spend 20 to 30 minutes per day in the sun at least 2 to 3 times a week between 11.00am to 3.00pm with the face and arms exposed without suncream. However, you must be careful not to get sun burnt. Suncream use is still advised for longer periods of sun exposure.
-  **Eating foods which contain higher amounts of vitamin D, such as:**
  - **Oily fish such as salmon, mackerel and sardines**
  - **Eggs**
  - **Fortified spreads and breakfast cereals**
  - **Powdered milk**
-  **Taking a regular lower dose vitamin D supplement.** Vitamin D supplements should be purchased from your local pharmacy or health food shop. Your local pharmacist can advise you as to the best product for you. Low dose vitamin D supplements will not routinely be prescribed by your doctor.

#### Where can I get more information on vitamin D?

- Department of Health - Dangers of vitamin D deficiency highlighted  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/dangers-of-vitamin-d-deficiency-highlighted>
- NHS choices - Vitamins and minerals - Vitamin D  
<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/vitamins-minerals/Pages/Vitamin-D.aspx>
- Patient.co.uk - Vitamin D Deficiency including Osteomalacia and Rickets  
<http://www.patient.co.uk/health/vitamin-d-deficiency-including-osteomalacia-and-rickets-leaflet#>
- National Osteoporosis Society - Healthy bones: Facts about food  
[http://www.nos.org.uk/~/\\_/document.doc?id=395](http://www.nos.org.uk/~/_/document.doc?id=395)