

Title: What you need to know about vitamin D

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Abstract: This is a short informative 1 page summary of the importance of vitamin D, how you make it, and how much you need everyday

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# What you need to know about vitamin D

Do you remember Tiny Tim from Charles Dickens' A Christmas Story? It is thought that he had a disease called Rickets, a softening of the bone, due to a lack of vitamin D. This is the most recognized problem of vitamin D deficiency, and it is a big deal. Fortunately, vitamin D has been put in foods like milk. This has drastically reduced the amount of Rickets. However, it is important to know that vitamin D has been shown to be beneficial in other areas of disease prevention:

**In a developing fetus** – growth retardation and skeletal deformities

**Later in life** – hip fracture, osteoporosis, common cancers, autoimmune diseases, infectious diseases like tuberculosis, and heart disease.



Sunshine on your arms and legs for twenty minutes around noon twice a week should do the trick. One thing to remember is that sunscreen with UVB protection blocks the skin's ability to create vitamin D. Therefore, apply your sunscreen after you have received your vitamin D for the day. Another way to get it is by going to pharmacy and getting an over the counter supplement. Most experts now agree that getting 800 IU– 1000 IU every day is the right amount. The pills come in both of these sizes and are relatively cheap.



The neat thing about vitamin D is that our body can make it. Your skin creates it when exposed to the sun. Therefore, the best way to get vitamin D is to get outside! However, those of us living in the northern part of the United States have a small window in the middle of the day where the sun is in the right spot to create sufficient vitamin D. During most of the winter, we never get the right sunlight to make vitamin D. Additionally, as we age our skins loses its ability to create vitamin D. For these reasons, vitamin D deficiency is very common. The important point is that vitamin D deficiency and the complications from it can be preventable.

