

Title: What's the Deal with D: A Patient's Guide to Vitamin D Supplementation

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Abstract:

General information regarding Vitamin D, what it is, why it's needed, how people get it, risk factors for deficiency, and safety.

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Is Vitamin D safe?

Vitamin D is generally safe and well tolerated by most people that take it in the doses recommended by doctors. Pregnant women are fine to take vitamin D in the same recommended amount as other adults. However, taking over the recommended amounts can lead to such symptoms as nausea, vomiting, poor appetite, constipation, and weakness. If you are experiencing these symptoms please contact your doctor. Also those people with long term high levels of calcium in their blood or poorly working kidneys should also contact their doctor before starting multi-vitamins that contain vitamin D.



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References:

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University of California, Riverside:
<http://vitamind.ucr.edu/>

What is the deal with D?

A Patient's Guide to Vitamin D Supplementation



VITAMIN D

What is Vitamin D and what does it do?

Vitamin D is a very important vitamin needed by our bodies for a variety of things. It helps us absorb other needed vitamins and minerals like calcium and phosphorus. This makes it essential to prevent weakening of the bones



(osteoporosis) and fractures especially of the hip. Vitamin D is also needed to strengthen our immune systems so that we may fight off infections. Recently scientists have discovered that Vitamin D may also help prevent certain types of

cancer, high blood pressure, as well as a specific type of depression that occurs in the winter called seasonal affective disorder. Unfortunately it can be difficult to get enough vitamin D to meet our bodies needs since few foods naturally contain it in high levels.

How do we get Vitamin D?

We get vitamin D in a couple of ways. First of all our body makes it naturally when we are exposed to sunlight. This unfortunately means that people who live in areas that get low sunlight during certain times of the year (such as people who live in Northern climates during winter months) can easily become low. Another way to get vitamin D is to eat it, through food and vitamin pills. Foods such as fish, specifically salmon and tuna, eggs, and liver have vitamin D naturally. Some food in the USA also have it added to help boost the amount. These foods include milk, yogurt, orange juice with vitamin D, and certain ready to eat cereals. The final way to get vitamin D is to have it given by pills or shot.

Who is at risk?

There are several types of people at risk for not having enough vitamin D. As was said before, those who do not get out in the sunlight for whatever reasons such as where they live or those that cover their body for religious reasons are at



risk. People over 50 years old are at risk due to their skin not being as good at making vitamin D. Pregnant women, breastfed babies, people with dark skin, those who do not absorb fat from their gut, and obese or those who have undergone gastric bypass surgery are also at risk.

Dosing Vitamin D

Vitamin D is given in amounts measured by something called an international unit per day (IU/day). The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends 400 IU/day for all breastfed babies. Recent research has shown that most people need about 700-800 IU/day added to their diet to get the benefits. Multivitamin pills range from 400 to 1000 IU/day. Sometimes doctors will recommend a shot or pill of vitamin D which may be as high as 50,000 IU. This is for when a person is seriously low in the vitamin and requires talking with a doctor. A simple blood test is needed to check a person's vitamin D level.