

Vitamin D

RECOMMENDED DOSAGES

- All infants from 0-12 months who drink less than 32 ounces of standard infant formula should be given 400 IU's (International Units) of Vitamin D
- All children and adolescents should be given 400 IU's of Vitamin D
- All adults should be taking at least 1,000 IU's of Vitamin D and should consult their physician for the need to take more.
- Patients on certain medications or with certain medical conditions, such as fat-malabsorption concerns, should consult their doctor for their specific Vitamin D needs

For more information about Vitamin D please contact your primary care physician.

This report was compiled by Ammonoosuc Community Health Services, Inc. (ACHS) clinical staff for informational purposes, and does not replace any advice one might receive from a qualified health care provider.

Founded in 1975, Ammonoosuc Community Health Services is a nonprofit community health center offering a network of quality, affordable primary health services. Our programs promote and support the well-being of individuals and families by emphasizing preventive care and encouraging active participation in one's own health. ACHS serves 26 towns in northern Grafton and southern Coos counties and has sites located in Littleton, Franconia, Whitefield, Warren and Woodsville. We provide comprehensive services, regardless of one's ability to pay, to over 10,000 patients.



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Information for a Healthy Life



Vitamin D

let a little sunshine in



**Ammonoosuc
Community Health Services, Inc.**

Littleton • Franconia • Warren • Whitefield • Woodsville

Vitamin D *let a little sunshine in*

Vitamin D is an essential vitamin that the body changes into an important hormone needed for maintaining good health.

WHY WE NEED VITAMIN D

Vitamin D's main job is to help the body absorb Calcium into the bloodstream for:

- development of healthy bones, muscles and teeth
- preventing soft and weakened bones in children (rickets)
- preventing loss of bone density (osteoporosis) in adults

Recently, a lack of Vitamin D has been identified as a possible link to different types of cancer, heart disease, stroke, hypertension, autoimmune disease, diabetes, depression, chronic pain, osteoarthritis, muscle weakness, birth defects, periodontal disease and more.

SUNLIGHT & VITAMIN D

The natural way for our bodies to get Vitamin D is by exposure to sunlight. In northern New England, a person might be able to get the Vitamin D he/she needs in the summer months by normal sun exposure during typical outdoor activities, but from October through May, even if we are outside, the sun is too low in the sky to be helpful in producing Vitamin D.

SOURCES OF VITAMIN D

Few foods in nature contain Vitamin D. The best natural sources come from fatty fish like salmon, sardines, tuna and mackerel. Smaller amounts are found in beef liver and egg yolks. Fortified foods such as milk, ready-to-eat cereals, margarine and orange juice are the usual sources for us to get Vitamin D in the diet. Supplements are available over-the-counter. Some may want to take these only during the winter months when Vitamin D production even with exposure to the sun is inadequate. Also worth mentioning, Vitamin D supplementation is not needed on days of adequate sun exposure without sunscreen.

WHO MIGHT BE AT RISK FOR VITAMIN D DEFICIENCY

- Older adults
- Those with limited sun exposure
- Those with dark skin
- Those with problems absorbing fat
- Those who have had gastric bypass surgery
- Those who are overweight or obese
- Breastfed infants (breastfeeding is still healthier, but should supplement with Vitamin D drops)

PRO-ACTIVE APPROACH TO A VITAMIN D DEFICIENCY

If you think you may be at risk for a Vitamin D deficiency, see your health care provider and ask about a blood test to determine the deficiency.

Steps you can take to prevent a deficiency:

- try getting 10-15 minutes of natural sun exposure before putting on sunscreen so your body can make its own Vitamin D (talk to your doctor about safe amounts of sun exposure for your skin type)
- talk to your health care provider about supplementing your diet with over-the-counter Vitamin D
- ensure you have a well-balanced diet, including fatty fish and Vitamin D-fortified milk and cereals

