

Vitamin D Supplementation

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that a supplement of 400 IU/day of vitamin D should begin within the first few days of life and that children should continue receiving vitamin D throughout childhood.

Vitamin D helps children develop strong bones, teeth, and muscle. Vitamin D deficiencies can lead to weak bones and serious bone diseases, including rickets. Vitamin D may also play a role in the prevention of other diseases.

Although the sun is a source of vitamin D, infants should avoid direct sun exposure due to risk of sunburn and of skin cancer.



Vitamin D Supplements for Infants

- Must contain 400 IU per dose.
- Should be labeled with words “Baby” or “Infant” to insure proper dosing.
- Available in two preparations:



Contains 400 IU per drop.

Place 1 drop onto nipple or directly into baby's mouth. Repeat once a day.



Contains 400 IU per 1 mL.

Place 1 mL into medicinal dropper and gently squeeze inside baby's cheek. Repeat once a day.

Breastfeeding Infants

All breastfed babies should be supplemented with 400 IU/day of vitamin D. Breastfeeding is the recommended method of infant feeding. It provides necessary nutrients and immune factors to your baby. Breast milk does not have enough vitamin D for your baby.

Partial and Non-Breastfeeding Infants

Infants consuming less than 1 liter (about 32 ounces) of infant formula per day should receive 400 IU/day of vitamin D.

All Women and Children 1 year and older

It is recommended that women and children over the age of 1 consume 600 IU/day of vitamin D. Fatty fish and fish oils are the best natural sources of vitamin D, but smaller amounts are found in liver, cheese, egg yolks, and milk that is fortified with vitamin D. Please discuss with your health care provider if you and your child are obtaining adequate levels of vitamin D and if a supplement is needed.

References:

National Institutes of Health: Office of Dietary Supplements. (2016). Vitamin D Fact Sheet for Health Professionals. <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/VitaminD-HealthProfessional/>

Wagner et. al. (2008). Prevention of Rickets and Vitamin D Deficiency in Infants, Children, and Adolescents. *Pediatrics*. 122(5).<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/122/5/1142.short>

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