Why is vitamin D important?

Vitamin D is needed to build strong bones and teeth. It may also play a role in reducing the risk of many chronic diseases.

Does my baby need a vitamin D supplement? If so, how much?

All babies fed any amount of breastmilk need 400 international units (IU)* of a liquid vitamin D supplement. Start giving it once a day as soon as possible following birth, or as directed by your doctor**.

• If your baby is fed only breastmilk, give your baby 400 IU of liquid vitamin D daily.

• If your baby is fed both breastmilk and infant formula, give your baby 400 IU of liquid vitamin D daily.

• If your baby is fed only infant formula, your baby does not need a vitamin D supplement, unless your doctor recommends one. Infant formula contains vitamin D.

Choosing a vitamin D supplement

• Vitamin D for babies and toddlers comes in a liquid form. Find it at your local pharmacy.

• Choose a brand with 400 IU vitamin D3 (not vitamin D2 and not a mix of vitamins) unless your doctor recommends a certain type or dose.

• Always read the product label for specific measuring instructions before using

  » Products vary. For example, 400 IU may be measured in 1 mL of liquid or in just one drop. Ask a pharmacist if you are not sure.

I am taking a vitamin D supplement myself. Does my breastfed baby still need a vitamin D supplement?

Yes, your breastfed baby still needs 400 IU of liquid vitamin D given once daily. Getting enough vitamin D is still important for your own health. Adults need 600 IU of vitamin D daily.

What if I forget to give my baby the supplement?

Give your baby the supplement when you remember—but don’t give more than one dose a day. Do not give extra to make up for missed days.

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* This is a public health recommendation for healthy infants. Your doctor may recommend a different amount.

** For simplicity the term doctor is used instead of health care provider which also includes midwives, nurse practitioners or registered dietitians.
Vitamin D for Babies and Toddlers

What if my baby keeps spitting up the liquid vitamin D?

It is important that your baby receives the Vitamin D so you might try:

⦁ giving it at a different time of day and before feeding, not after.
⦁ a different brand such as a product that gives 400IU in one drop instead of 1 mL.

Why can't I rely on the sun to meet my child's vitamin D needs?

⦁ In Canada, we can't make vitamin D from the sun during the months from October to March.
⦁ In the summer, young children’s skin needs to be protected from the sun, even on cloudy days. When our skin is well protected, it cannot make vitamin D from the sun.
⦁ A daily liquid supplement with 400 IU of vitamin D provides a safe and reliable source of vitamin D for babies and toddlers—all year round.

Does my toddler need a vitamin D supplement? If so, how much?

Toddlers one year and older need 600 IU vitamin D from food, fortified milk, and sometimes from a supplement.

⦁ Offer your toddler food sources of vitamin D (see table).
⦁ For toddlers that are breastfed, continue to give 400 IU of liquid vitamin D every day.
⦁ For toddlers that are not breastfed, offer 2 cups (500 mL) of fortified whole milk (3.25% milk fat) each day.
⦁ Talk to your doctor about your child’s vitamin D needs. A liquid vitamin D supplement may be recommended.

Is it possible to get too much vitamin D from food and supplements?

Yes, your child can get too much vitamin D. Taking too much from a supplement is most often the cause.

⦁ Give only 400 IU of liquid vitamin D once daily, unless your doctor has told you differently.
⦁ Always read the product label for specific measuring instructions.

Common food sources of vitamin D

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Child Size Serving</th>
<th>Vitamin D (International Units)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fortified Cow’s or Goat’s milk</td>
<td>125 mL (½ cup)</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortified soy beverage (age 2 &amp; up)</td>
<td>125 mL (½ cup)</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortified margarine</td>
<td>5 mL (1 tsp)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egg yolk</td>
<td>1 egg</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salmon, sockeye, canned</td>
<td>45 g (1½ ounces)</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salmon, pink, canned</td>
<td>45 g (1½ ounces)</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuna, light or white, canned</td>
<td>45 g (1½ ounces)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>