

Facts on Vitamin D

- Vitamin D helps build strong, healthy bones and teeth.
- Babies need vitamin D for healthy growth and development.
- If a baby's vitamin D levels are too low, they are at risk of getting rickets, a condition in which leg bones become soft and bowlegged.

How do we get vitamin D?

Vitamin D comes from different sources:



Sunlight: Vitamin D is formed naturally when skin is exposed to sunlight. At certain times of the year and in certain places, sunlight alone is not enough because Canada is located so far north. Also, sunscreen and clothing, which are needed to protect babies from the harmful effects of the sun, won't allow vitamin D to be formed.



Foods: Some foods—like fatty fish (salmon, tuna, halibut) and eggs—are good sources of vitamin D. In Canada, vitamin D is added to cow's milk, some yogurts, tofu, and margarine during production. Vitamin D is also added to infant formula during production.



Vitamin supplement: For babies, vitamin D supplements come in liquid form and can be given daily with a dropper. The vitamin can be bought at many grocery stores and pharmacies. Read the instructions carefully to be sure you give your baby the right amount and only use the dropper that comes with the supplement you purchased. If you are unsure about the right amount, talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist.

Vitamin D and Your Baby

All babies need 400 International Units (IU) of vitamin D every day until they are a year old or until their diet includes at least 400 IU of vitamin D from food. For fully or partially breastfed babies, a daily vitamin D supplement is recommended. Breast milk is the best nutrition you can offer your growing baby. Even when your baby starts eating other foods at 6 months, you can continue to breastfeed until 2 years of age and beyond.

Healthy term babies who are fed only infant formula do not require a vitamin D supplement because it is already added to the formula.

When can I stop giving my baby a vitamin D supplement?

Once your baby is one year of age and is eating a variety of foods (including 2 cups of 3.25% milk), he or she will be getting enough vitamin D and no longer needs a supplement.

Your Daily Vitamin D Needs

Age	Daily Requirement
Infants (0 – 12 months)	400 IU
Children and Adults	600 IU*
During Pregnancy and Breastfeeding	600 IU**

*Vitamin D needs increase with age. All adults over the age of 50 should take a daily Vitamin D supplement of 400 IU in addition to following Canada's Food Guide.

**Women who are pregnant should not take a vitamin A supplement [or a cod liver oil supplement], and should limit their consumption of liver, because of its high vitamin A content. Too much vitamin A can cause birth defects. The vitamin A found in prenatal supplements is a safe amount to take during pregnancy.

Is it possible to take too much vitamin D?

Neither food sources nor exposure to the sun are likely to give you too much Vitamin D. It is possible to take too much Vitamin D from supplements. Vitamin D toxicity (see tolerable upper intake chart) can cause kidney stones, and heart arrhythmias. It can also raise blood levels of calcium which leads to damage to the heart, blood vessels, and kidneys.

Age	Tolerable Upper Intake
0–6 months	1,000 IU
7–12 months	1,500 IU
1–3 years	2,500 IU
4–8 years	3,000 IU
≥9 years	4,000 IU

