



Vitamin D

Vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin that is needed for bone growth. Without enough vitamin D your bones can become thin, brittle, or soft and misshapen. Together with calcium, vitamin D helps protect against osteoporosis. Vitamin D helps your brain send signals to your muscles, strengthen your immune system, and reduce inflammation.

Sources of Vitamin D

Sunlight:

Most people get vitamin D from the sun. Your skin produces vitamin D following direct exposure to sunlight. Ten to fifteen minutes of sun exposure without sunscreen at least twice a week may be enough to satisfy your vitamin D needs. Vitamin D production may be affected by: time of day, season, where you live, sunscreen, clothing, smog, skin color, and age. Individuals with limited sun exposure need to include good sources of vitamin D in their diet or take a standard age-appropriate vitamin and mineral supplement.

Food:

Very few foods in nature have vitamin D. Fish provides the best source. Fortified foods provide most of the vitamin D in the American diet. Some good sources of vitamin D are:

Food	IU
1 Tbsp cod liver oil	1360
1 cup soy milk, fortified	209-320
3 oz salmon, cooked	583-794
3.5 oz wild sockeye	687
3.5 oz albacore tuna	544
3 oz salmon, canned	465
4 oz mushroom, portabella	446
3 oz mackerel	388
3 oz sardines, Atlantic, canned in oil	164
3 oz tuna, light, canned in water	154
3 oz flounder or sole, cooked	154
4 oz tofu	157
1 cup milk with added vitamin D	115-124



If you are concerned that you may not be getting enough vitamin D from either sun exposure or food, ask your doctor about checking your vitamin D level.

*American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all breast-fed and partially breast-fed infants should receive a supplement of 400 IU of vitamin D per day until weaned.

Daily Vitamin D Needs	
Age (years)	IU (International Units)
Birth – 1*	400
1-13	600
14-18	600
19-50	600
51-70	600
71+	800