

Sunshine Vitamin: Embrace the power of Vitamin D



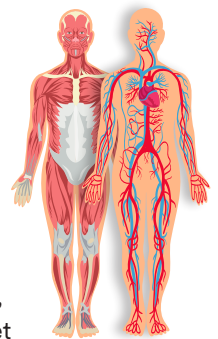
Did you know?

Vitamin D, also known as the sunshine vitamin, is an essential nutrient that can naturally be obtained from mild sun exposure, and to a lower extent, from food.

Interestingly, the GCC's United Arab Emirates (UAE) while a sunny country, has one of the world's highest levels of Vitamin D Deficiency (VDD). Local health experts believe the condition is prevalent mostly due to sedentary lifestyles, and the lack of sufficient sun exposure, especially during the summer season when people stay indoors trying to avoid the heat.

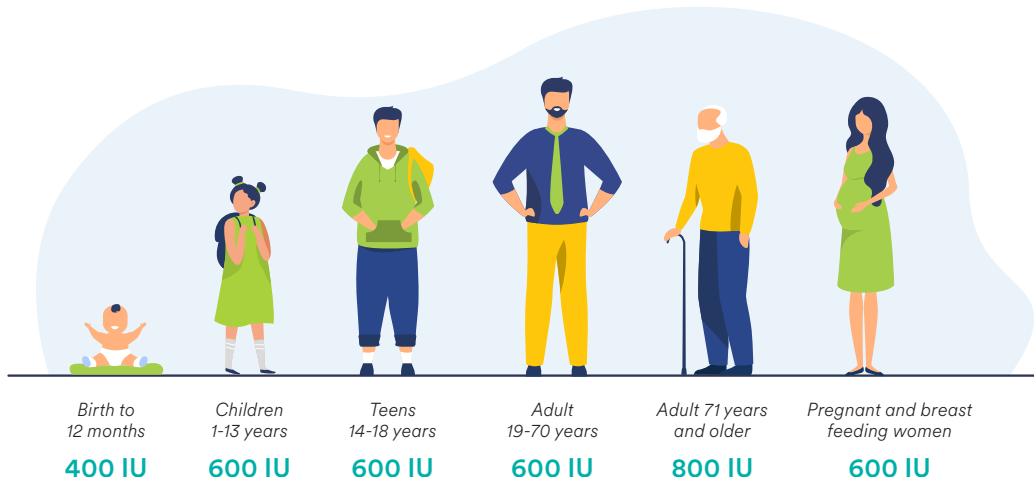
Why is Vitamin D so important to our body?

- **Bones & teeth:** need it to maintain strong bones, by allowing the body to absorb the calcium we take from food and supplements. In other terms, no matter how much milk you get to fortify your bones' calcium, if your body doesn't have enough vitamin D, calcium won't be absorbed.
- **Muscles** need it to move,
- **Nerves** need it to carry messages between the brain and every body part,
- **The immune system:** needs it to fight off invading bacteria and viruses.



In adults, vitamin D deficiency can lead to “**Osteomalacia**”, or softening of the bones. Symptoms of bone pain and muscle weakness can indicate inadequate vitamin D levels, but such symptoms can be subtle and go undetected in the initial stages.

How much Vitamin D do I need?



What is the best way to get my Vitamin D?

- The most natural way to get daily needed vitamin D is by exposing your bare skin to sunlight.
- How much vitamin D is produced from sunlight depends on the time of day, where you live in the world, and the color of your skin. This needed exposure hence could be just 15 minutes for a very fair skinned person, yet a couple of hours or more for a dark-skinned person. That said, please beware the risks of skin cancer from prolonged exposures to the sun.
- If you avoid the sun or cover your body with sunscreen or clothing, you should include good sources of vitamin D in your diet or take a supplement.
- Some foods that are highly rich in vitamin D are: cod liver oil & fatty fish (ex: salmon).

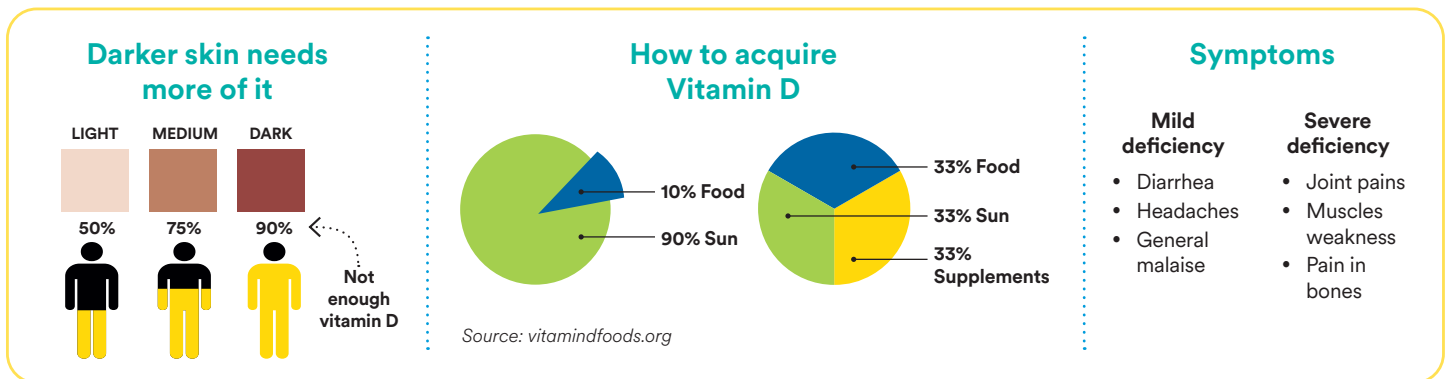
Food	IUs per serving*	Percent DV**
Cod liver oil, 1 tablespoon	1,360	340
Swordfish, cooked, 3 ounces (approx. 85 g.)	566	142
Salmon (sockeye), cooked, 3 ounces (approx. 85 g.)	447	112
Tuna fish, canned in water, drained, 3 ounces (approx. 85 g.)	154	39

*IU: International Unit.

**DV: Daily recommended value.



Throwing some light



BONUS: Are you being a smart health consumer? Vitamin D test – is it really needed?

The international medical community increasingly argues that most of us don't need a vitamin D test. Many people have low levels of vitamin D, but few have seriously low levels.

Your healthcare professional should focus on measures to increase your vitamin D levels through advice on sun exposure, vitamin D-rich foods or taking supplements if needed.

Only people with certain conditions are candidates for testing, including but not limited to:

- Osteoporosis or other bone-health problems
- Conditions that affect fat absorption, including celiac disease or weight-loss surgery
- Routinely take medications that interfere with vitamin D activity, including anticonvulsants and glucocorticoids.

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