

Integrated Regional Falls Program



North Simcoe Muskoka LHIN

Vitamin D: A Guide to Your Needs

Vitamin D is an essential vitamin that helps the body in many ways. It works with calcium to build and maintain strong bones. It helps to keep muscles strong and improve your balance. Vitamin D is an important part of your daily routine to reduce your risk of falling and injury due to a fall.



How do I get vitamin D?

The body makes its own vitamin D when the sun penetrates the skin. This is called endogenous vitamin D. This works well if you live close to the equator or in a sunny climate like California or Arizona, but it is hard for Canadians to get enough vitamin D through the sun. Therefore, **Osteoporosis Canada** recommends routine vitamin D supplementation for all Canadian adults year round.

Vitamin D is also found naturally in eggs and fatty fish, but because there are very few food sources of vitamin D, it is also added to milk, soy milk, & orange juice. Because it is hard to get vitamin D “naturally”, **Health Canada** recommends all adults over age 50 take a supplement.



How much vitamin D do I need?

Health Canada says all adults over the age of 50 require a supplement of 400 IU per day *in addition to what they get through a healthy diet* that follows the Canada's Food Guide. For people over the age of 50 at moderate risk for vitamin D deficiency or those younger adults at high risk (such as those with osteoporosis, multiple fractures, or conditions affecting vitamin D absorption) Osteoporosis Canada recommends supplementation with a minimum 800 IU per day, and **up to 2000 IU** per day. While vitamin D appears very safe, it is not known if high doses are harmful for some people. **Do not take more than 2000 IU per day unless recommended by your doctor.**

What should I look for when buying a supplement?

Vitamin D is available as a capsule or a small tablet or in liquid drops. Look for vitamin D3 (or cholecalciferol) by itself. It is also in multivitamins and is sometimes added in combination with some calcium tablets.

Ask your pharmacist or doctor for recommendations!



Suggested resources:

Osteoporosis Canada (www.osteoporosis.ca)

Canada's Food Guide (<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php>)

References:

Health Canada. Canada's Food Guide. Vitamin D for people over age 50: background.

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/vitamin/vita-d-eng.php#a12> Accessed online Sept 4, 2014.

Osteoporosis Canada. 2010 Vitamin D recommendations.

http://www.cmaj.ca/content/early/2010/10/12/cmaj.100771.full.pdf+html?ikey=edc6c6048e7d4acdc41368fe3f1e622bf5a2deac&keytype2=tf_ipsecsha.

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