

VITAMIN D

THE SUNSHINE VITAMIN

Why is vitamin D so important for many aspects of your health?

WHAT IS VITAMIN D?

Vitamin D is a fat-soluble hormone which is stored in the fat cells of our bodies. However, due to its need for pretty much every function in the body, it would be better classified as a hormone.

Vitamin D is not called the sunshine vitamin for no reason. About 90% of vitamin D is created by the body when the sunlight hits your skin, meaning that only 10% can be acquired through diet.

With more time spent indoors, less sunlight between October and March, extensive use of sunscreen or increased amount of clothing in autumn and winter, it is no surprise that vitamin D deficiency in the UK is on the rise.

POPULATIONS AT HIGHER RISK OF DEFICIENCY

- pregnant women
- breastfed babies
- children under 5
- elderly adults
- housebound or hospitalised people
- obese and underweight individuals
- African and Asian populations with darker skin tones
- people living further away from the equator
- people with genetic predisposition

WHY IS VITAMIN D SO IMPORTANT FOR THE BODY?

Vitamin D is vital for both physical and mental well-being.

Vitamin D may help to improve:

- bone health
- brain health
- cognitive function
- mental health and mood
- gastrointestinal health
- hormonal health
- immunity
- sleep

Vitamin D may help to reduce:

- depression
- inflammation
- autoimmunity disease risks

FOOD SOURCES OF VITAMIN D

- oily fish (salmon, sardines or mackerel)
- eggs
- liver
- mushrooms exposed to the sunlight
- vitamin D fortified foods

SHOULD I TAKE A VITAMIN D SUPPLEMENT?

Due to the limited food sources of vitamin D, Public Health England recommends that everyone tops up their diet with vitamin D supplements from October to March. Vitamin D is best supplemented as D3 (its active form) combined with vitamin K2.

However, taking too much vitamin D can be toxic and lead to bone, kidney and heart damage. It is therefore absolutely essential that you test your vitamin D levels before starting to take a supplement.

HOW CAN A NUTRITIONAL THERAPIST HELP?

A Nutritional Therapist can help you organise and interpret a vitamin D test if your GP is reluctant to do so.

It is important that you know what your vitamin D test results mean. Not only to find out whether you need to supplement in the first place, but if you are deficient how much you need to supplement with.

With a broad normal results range varying between 30 and 100 ng/mmol, a Nutritional Therapist will always work out how to move you towards optimal levels, using high quality professional supplements.

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KEEP CALM

NUTRITION

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