



How can you increase your vitamin D levels?

LONG TERM VITAMIN D SUPPLEMENTS ARE NO LONGER RECOMMENDED ON PRESCRIPTION IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND THEREFORE NEED TO BE PURCHASED IN LINE WITH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ADVICE

Vitamin D from the sun

Sunlight helps the skin on our body to produce vitamin D; however it is important that sun exposure is as safe as possible. Small amounts of incidental sunlight, as you might get through your daily activities, may help to boost your vitamin D levels and just exposing your face and forearms to the sun should be enough, however it is important that any sun exposure is as safe as possible. If you are at high risk of skin cancer (fair skin, family history, have more than 50 moles or take certain medication), you should make protecting your skin in the sun a priority, and look to get as much vitamin D as possible from other sources, such as your diet and supplements, rather than placing yourself at higher risk from skin cancer.

It is not known exactly how much time is needed in the sun to make enough vitamin D to meet the body's requirements. This is because there are a number of factors that can affect how vitamin D is made, such as your skin colour or how much skin you have exposed. But you should be careful not to burn in the sun, so take care to cover up, or protect your skin with sunscreen before your skin starts to turn red or burn. People with dark skin, such as those of African, African-Caribbean or south Asian origin, will need to spend longer in the sun to produce the same amount of vitamin D as someone with lighter skin.

Take a regular vitamin D supplement.

Products marketed as nutritional supplements are available over the counter from pharmacies, health food shops or supermarkets.

Adults: Supplements containing 1000 units (25 micrograms) of vitamin D are considerably cheaper to purchase than those containing 400 units (10 micrograms) or 800 units (20 micrograms). These typically cost less than £1 to buy for a month's supply.

Children: Newborn up to 1 month: 300 - 400 units (7.5 – 10 micrograms) daily.

1 month to 12 years: 400 - 800 units (10 - 20 micrograms) daily (300 units daily if using Healthy Start Vitamin Drops).

Your Community Pharmacist can advise you on appropriate products.

Women and children.

Women and children may qualify for the Healthy Start scheme and can get free supplements containing the recommended amounts of vitamin D. More information can be obtained from <https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/> or by asking your midwife/health visitor.

Eat foods that contain higher amounts of vitamin D as part of a healthy balanced diet, such as:

- Egg yolks
- Beef liver
- Oily fish – such as salmon, sardines, herring and mackerel
- Fortified foods – such as most fat spreads, soy yoghurts, soy milk, almond milk, some orange juices and some breakfast cereals
- Ricotta Cheese
- Red meat
- Mushrooms

Further information on vitamin D from the NHS is also available on the NHS website using the following link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vitamins-and-minerals/vitamin-d/>