

Vitamin D for Babies and Toddlers

Patient Information

www.interiorhealth.ca

Why is vitamin D important?

Vitamin D is needed to build strong bones and teeth. It may also play a role in reducing the risk of many chronic diseases.

Does my baby need a vitamin D supplement? If so, how much?

All babies fed any amount of breastmilk need 400 international units (IU)* of a liquid vitamin D supplement. Start giving it once a day as soon as possible following birth, or as directed by your doctor**.

- **If your baby is fed only breastmilk**, give your baby 400 IU of liquid vitamin D daily.
- **If your baby is fed both breastmilk and infant formula**, give your baby 400 IU of liquid vitamin D daily.
- **If your baby is fed only infant formula**, your baby does not need a vitamin D supplement, unless your doctor recommends one. Infant formula contains vitamin D.



Choosing a vitamin D supplement

- Vitamin D for babies and toddlers comes in a liquid form. Find it at your local pharmacy.
- Choose a brand with 400 IU vitamin D3 (not vitamin D2 and not a mix of vitamins) unless your doctor recommends a certain type or dose.
- **Always read the product label for specific measuring instructions before using**
 - » Products vary. For example, 400 IU may be measured in 1 mL of liquid or in just one drop. Ask a pharmacist if you are not sure.

I am taking a vitamin D supplement myself. Does my breastfed baby still need a vitamin D supplement?

Yes, your breastfed baby still needs 400 IU of liquid vitamin D given once daily. Getting enough vitamin D is still important for your own health. Adults need 600 IU of vitamin D daily.

What if I forget to give my baby the supplement?

Give your baby the supplement when you remember—but don't give more than one dose a day. Do not give extra to make up for missed days.

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* This is a public health recommendation for healthy infants. Your doctor may recommend a different amount.

** For simplicity the term doctor is used instead of health care provider which also includes midwives, nurse practitioners or registered dietitians.



Interior Health

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HealthLink BC

Dial 8-1-1

Hearing Impaired Dial 7-1-1

Talk to a Nurse 24 hours/day, 7 days/week

Pharmacist available between 5 p.m. - 9 a.m. daily

Dietitian between 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. - Monday to Friday

www.healthlinkbc.ca

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What if my baby keeps spitting up the liquid vitamin D?

It is important that your baby receives the Vitamin D so you might try:

- giving it at a different time of day and before feeding, not after.
- a different brand such as a product that gives 400IU in one drop instead of 1 mL.

Does my toddler need a vitamin D supplement? If so, how much?

Toddlers one year and older need 600 IU vitamin D from food, fortified milk, and sometimes from a supplement.

- Offer your toddler food sources of vitamin D (see table).
- For toddlers that are breastfed, continue to give 400 IU of liquid vitamin D every day.
- For toddlers that are not breastfed, offer 2 cups (500 mL) of fortified whole milk (3.25% milk fat) each day.
- Talk to your doctor about your child's vitamin D needs. A liquid vitamin D supplement may be recommended.

Why can't I rely on the sun to meet my child's vitamin D needs?

- In Canada, we can't make vitamin D from the sun during the months from October to March.
- In the summer, young children's skin needs to be protected from the sun, even on cloudy days. When our skin is well protected, it cannot make vitamin D from the sun.
- A daily liquid supplement with 400 IU of vitamin D provides a safe and reliable source of vitamin D for babies and toddlers—all year round.

Is it possible to get too much vitamin D from food and supplements?

Yes, your child can get too much vitamin D. Taking too much from a supplement is most often the cause.

- Give only 400 IU of liquid vitamin D once daily, unless your doctor has told you differently
- Always read the product label for specific measuring instructions



Common food sources of vitamin D

Food	Child Size Serving	Vitamin D (International Units)
Fortified Cow's or Goat's milk	125 mL (½ cup)	52
Fortified soy beverage (age 2 & up)	125 mL (½ cup)	44
Fortified margarine	5 mL (1 tsp)	25
Egg yolk	1 egg	32
Salmon, sockeye, canned	45 g (1½ ounces)	334
Salmon, pink, canned	45 g (1½ ounces)	261
Tuna, light or white, canned	45 g (1½ ounces)	22