

Prescribing policy on Vitamin D supplementation

Public Health England issued advice on vitamin D based on the recommendations of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition:

- To protect bone and muscle health, everyone needs vitamin D equivalent to an average daily intake of 10 micrograms (400 units).
- In spring and summer, the majority of the population get enough vitamin D through sunlight on the skin and a healthy, balanced diet.
- During autumn and winter, EVERYONE will need to rely on dietary sources of vitamin D. Since it is difficult for people to meet the 10 microgram recommendation from consuming foods naturally containing or fortified with vitamin D, people should consider taking a daily supplement containing 10 micrograms (400 IU) of vitamin D in autumn and winter. (From October to March)

Supplementation throughout the year is recommended for the following high risk groups for vitamin D deficiency:

High risk group	Vitamin D supplementation dose all year round
People whose skin has little or no exposure to the sun, e.g. care homes residents, or who always cover their skin when outside	10 micrograms (400 IU)
Ethnic minority groups with dark skin, from African, Afro-Caribbean and South Asian backgrounds, may not get enough vitamin D from sunlight in the summer	10 micrograms (400 IU)
Pregnant and breastfeeding mothers -to ensure the mother's requirements for vitamin D are met and to build adequate fetal stores for early infancy.	10 micrograms (400 IU)
Babies under 1 year old	8.5 to 10 microgram (340-400 units)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Children who have more than 500ml of infant formula a day do not need any additional vitamin D as formula is already fortified with Vitamin D. 	
Children aged 1-5 years	10 microgram (400 units)

Mid Essex does not support the prescribing of vitamin D supplements. For the treatment of Vitamin D deficiency please refer to the [Vitamin D deficiency prescribing guidelines \(LINK\)](#).

Funding of vitamin D supplements to protect and maintain bone, teeth and muscle health is a personal responsibility. Vitamin D is available to purchase in pharmacies, health food shops and supermarkets. It is expected that patients will purchase such supplements. Community pharmacists or other healthcare professionals are able to advise on suitable vitamin D products.

Vitamin D is found naturally in a small number of foods including oily fish, red meat, liver and egg yolks and in fortified food like breakfast cereals and fat spreads which patients should be encouraged to consume as part of a healthy balanced diet.

Vitamin D supplements are available free-of-charge for low-income families on the Healthy Start scheme. We would strongly advise and support the use of the Healthy Start scheme as advocated in the CMO letter. Healthy Start is a UK-wide government scheme to improve the health of low-income pregnant women and families on benefits and tax credits. Full information is available at www.healthystart.nhs.uk

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Previous version	Key Changes
December 2013	References, Links to healthy start vitamin suppliers, formatting
June 2015	Guideline changed to prescribing policy Updated according to PHE advice – all adults consider supplementation during autumn and winter months
October 2016	Addition of pregnant and breastfeeding mothers to high risk group needing supplementation