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For Naturopathic Medicine & Functional Nutrition

Vitamin D

Vitamin D is a unique vitamin that your body can make when your skin is exposed to sunlight. It's also known as the "sunshine vitamin." Besides being produced by the body, it's found in some foods and supplements

Health Benefits

Bone Health: Vitamin D plays a major role in regulating the amount of calcium and phosphate in the body, nutrients that are needed to keep bones, teeth, and muscles healthy. When Vitamin D levels are low, our bodies can't absorb calcium effectively from the food we eat. This means that even if you're getting enough calcium in your diet, without enough Vitamin D, your body can't take in the calcium it needs to maintain strong and healthy bones.

Immune System Support: Vitamin D is necessary for a well-functioning immune system. It helps stimulate the growth of immune cells, which are your body's defense against viruses and bacteria. Research shows that having enough Vitamin D in your body can reduce the risk of developing infections, including respiratory infections like the flu. Vitamin D deficiency is also associated with an increased risk of autoimmune diseases, where the immune system attacks the body's own cells.

Muscle Function: Vitamin D plays a role in muscle function, and it's thought that it helps regulate the amount of calcium and phosphate in the muscles. These minerals are essential for muscle contractions. In older adults, higher levels of Vitamin D are associated with better muscle function, reduced risk of falling, and lower risk of fractures. This is particularly important for older adults, who are at a higher risk of falls and fractures, which can lead to serious health problems.

Mood Regulation: Vitamin D plays a role in brain development and function, and low levels of Vitamin D have been linked with depression. Some research suggests that Vitamin D can affect the levels of chemicals in the brain called serotonin and dopamine, which are known to affect mood. Several studies have found that people with depression have lower levels of Vitamin D compared to people who are not depressed. However, more research is needed to fully understand the link between Vitamin D and depression.



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Food Sources

It's not easy to get all the Vitamin D you need from food alone. Here are some foods that do have Vitamin D, along with the average amount per serving:

Swordfish, cooked (3 ounces): 566 IU

Salmon, cooked (3 ounces): 447 IU

Tuna, canned in water (3 ounces): 154 IU

Orange juice fortified with Vitamin D (1 cup): 137 IU

Milk, fortified with Vitamin D (1 cup): 115-124 IU

Yogurt, fortified with Vitamin D (6 ounces): 80 IU

Sardines, canned in oil, drained (2 pieces): 46 IU

Beef liver, cooked (3 ounces): 42 IU

Eggs (1 large): 41 IU



Note: The DV values are based on a 2000-calorie diet for healthy adults. DV values may be different for children, pregnant women, or individuals with certain medical conditions.

Recommended Dietary Allowance

The Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for Vitamin D depends on age and life stage.

Some people may not get enough Vitamin D from sunlight or food, especially in the winter or if they live in northern latitudes. These people may need to take Vitamin D supplements. Always ask your doctor or a dietitian before starting a new supplement

Infants 0-12 months: 400 IU (10 mcg).
Children 1-18 years: 600 IU (15 mcg).
Adults 19-70 years: 600 IU (15 mcg).
Adults over 70 years: 800 IU (20 mcg).
Pregnant and lactating women: 600 IU (15 mcg).

*Retrieved from: https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/VitaminD-HealthProfessional/