



Tuckatalk

Vitamin D

Who Is At Risk of Low Vitamin D?

- Children with naturally dark skin
- Children that wear clothes covering most of their body
- Children that spend little or no time in the sun
- Children with a sibling or other family member with Vitamin D deficiency
- Children born to Vitamin D deficient mothers.

If you think your child or baby is at risk of Vitamin D deficiency, talk to your GP, Maternal and Child Health Nurse or Dietitian.

Where Do I Get Vitamin D?

Most of the Vitamin D our bodies need is formed by the action of the sun's ultraviolet (UV) light on the skin. Small amounts of Vitamin D can be found in food as well.

Children need 5 micrograms of Vitamin D daily.

Which Foods Contain Vitamin D?

The best sources of Vitamin D are fatty fish (sardines, herring, mackerel, tuna and salmon), milk (especially milks with added Vitamin D), and Vitamin D fortified soy drinks, margarines and dairy blend spreads.

Dietary sources alone rarely provide enough vitamin D to meet daily needs

Foods Containing Vitamin D

| FOOD | VITAMIN D (micrograms) |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Sardines, canned in oil (100g) | 2 |
| Tuna, canned in oil (100g) | 2 |
| Herring, pickled (100g) | 13 |
| Milk, regular (200ml) | 1 |
| Milk, Vitamin D fortified (200ml) | 4 |
| Fortified soy milk (200ml) | 4 |
| Dairy blend spread (20g) | 2 |
| Margarine, fortified (20g) | 2 |
| Cod liver oil (1 capsule)* | 3-10 |

*Cod liver oil capsules also contain Vitamin A, which can be toxic at high doses. Omega 3 fish oil supplements do not usually contain Vitamin D.



Vitamin D

Sun Exposure & Vitamin D: Getting the Balance Right

Sunlight is the best source of Vitamin D but also the major cause of skin cancer in Australia. A balance needs to be found to maintain Vitamin D levels, without increasing the risk of skin cancer. Most Australians achieve adequate Vitamin D levels through incidental sun exposure during typical day-to-day outdoor activities.

"Sensible sun protection does not put people at risk of vitamin D deficiency"

Cancer Council Australia

How much Sun Exposure in Canberra?

The Cancer Council ACT recommends:

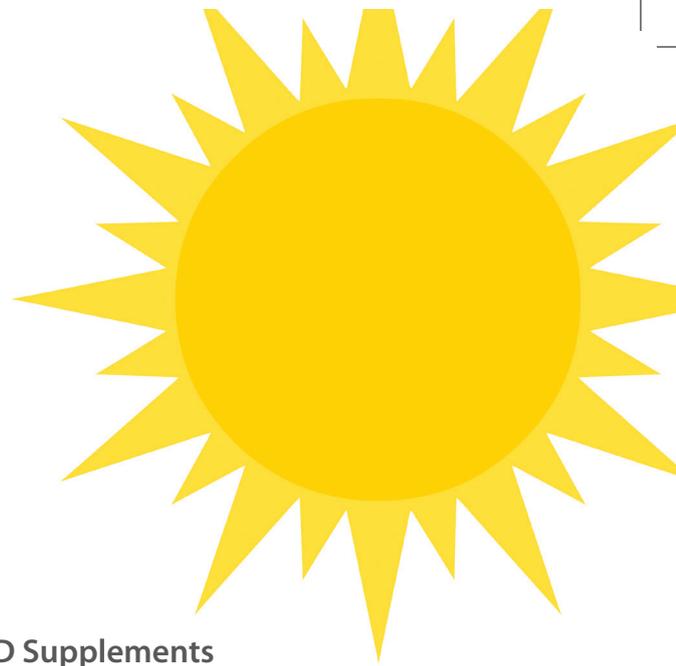
August to May:

A few minutes of sunlight exposure **most days of the week** on the face, arms and hands either side of the peak UV period (10am to 3pm).

June and July:

2–3 hours of sunlight exposure **spread over the week** on the face, arms and hands. Sun protection is generally not recommended during this period in Canberra.

Children with dark skin may need more sun exposure to make enough Vitamin D.



Vitamin D Supplements

Infants and children do not routinely need Vitamin D supplements in Australia.

If your child has been diagnosed with low Vitamin D levels your GP will arrange appropriate treatment.

Note: Over the counter multivitamins do not contain enough Vitamin D to treat deficiency.

Key points:

- Vitamin D helps absorb calcium, which is essential for bone development and growth
- Vitamin D deficiency can cause rickets (weakening of the bones)
- Some children are at increased risk of Vitamin D deficiency. Dark skin increases the risk
- The sun is the best source of Vitamin D
- Fatty fish, milk and vitamin D fortified foods are also good sources.



Where can I find out more information?

HERE ARE 4 WAYS:

1. **MAKE AN APPOINTMENT** with an ACT Health Community Dietitian by phoning **6207 9977**
2. **ATTEND** a Coping with Fussy Eater group by calling **6207 9977**
3. **CHECK OUT** more Tuckatalk factsheets at **www.health.act.gov.au**
4. **VISIT** the ACT Cancer Council website **www.actcancer.org** or phone the Cancer Council Helpline on **13 11 20**



The ACT Government is committed to making its information, services, events and venues, accessible to as many people as possible.

Enquiries about this publication should be directed to ACT Health, Communications and Marketing Unit, GPO Box 825 Canberra City ACT 2601 or email: HealthACT@act.gov.au © Australian Capital Territory, Australia, March 2014