

Vitamin D: Same vitamin, new research

Over the last few years research has shown vitamin D to have additional benefits beyond bone health, including prevention of certain cancers (breast, prostate and colorectal), heart disease and diabetes.

We can obtain vitamin D from three primary sources, which include food, sunlight and supplements. The amount that we should get is not yet agreed upon by scientists and policy makers. The current recommendation is listed as adequate intake (AI). The AI for vitamin D is 200IU for those under 50, 400IU for those between 50 and 70 and 600IU for those 71 and above.

➤ **Food Sources:**

- Fatty fish: Salmon, mackerel, sardines, tuna
- Fortified foods: Almost all milk sold in the United States is fortified with Vitamin D3 (the most bio-available form). Other fortified foods include most yogurts, some cheeses, breads, breakfast cereals, and orange juice.
- Other: egg yolks, beef liver

- ### ➤ **Sunlight:** Vitamin D is produced when skin is exposed to ultraviolet light. Many factors affect our ability to produce vitamin D from sun exposure
- Age and Pigment of skin: Ability to produce vitamin D diminishes with age and darker pigmented skin requires longer exposure to produce vitamin D.
 - Latitude: If you live above 35 degrees latitude, rays of sunlight aren't strong enough to induce vitamin D production during some winter months.

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- **Sunscreen:** Skin products with SPF limits our ability to produce vitamin D from the sun, but it does help prevent skin cancer. Adequate but not excessive exposure to the sun is something that should ultimately be discussed with a physician or healthcare provider based on individual risk factors for skin cancer and vitamin D deficiency. Researchers are suggesting 15 minutes of sun exposure which can produce significant amounts of vitamin D and minimize the harmful effects of the sun.
- **Supplements:** Supplements may be the best way for some people to get adequate vitamin D based on the limited number of food sources and the potential hazards of sun exposure. Discuss supplement needs with your physician or healthcare provider.

Until next time: Eat Well, Live Well 😊