

VITAMIN D

What is it, where can you get it, and what impact does it have on health?

Sources of Vitamin D:

There are 4 ways to get vitamin D. It's naturally present in some foods, and many others are fortified with it. It's available as a supplement, and you can also get vitamin D from sun exposure. According to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, "Vitamin D is unique in that sunlight on the skin enables the body to make vitamin D." (This sun exposure is best done in moderation).

If you want to get vitamin D from your food, your best bet is a fortified product. Look for vitamin-D-fortified milk, yogurt, soy products, cereal, and orange juice.

There is also naturally-occurring vitamin D, but it's only available in smaller amounts. Find it in some fish, egg yolks, and certain mushrooms.

Vitamin D and You:

Vitamin D is a vital nutrient. The National Library of Medicine asserts, "Vitamin D helps your body absorb calcium. Calcium is one of the main building blocks of bone."

According to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, "Adequate vitamin D status is important for health. Extreme lack of vitamin D (i.e., vitamin D deficiency) results in rickets in children and osteomalacia (softening of bones) in adults. Adequate vitamin D also can help reduce the risk of bone fractures." The National Institutes of Health further highlight the dangers of not getting enough vitamin D, maintaining, "Without sufficient vitamin D, bones can become thin, brittle, or misshapen."

