



Kids and Vitamin D Deficiency

Facts About Vitamin D Deficiency

Severe Vitamin D deficiency is becoming rampant around the U.S. and other countries, causing devastating impacts on children.

“Vitamin D is essential to our body’s ability to absorb calcium from our diet to build and maintain healthy bones,” says Dr. Ellen Raney of Shriners Hospitals for Children® in Portland. “Vitamin D deficiency or nutritional rickets can show up in several ways. Growth may be severely stunted, or the arms and legs may not grow straight. Bones may be weak and easily broken.” The problem is worse in northern parts of the U.S. However, Vitamin D deficiency is becoming common even in sunnier areas.



Lifestyle Issues Contributing to Vitamin D Deficiency:

- decreased outdoor activities
- constant use of sunscreen while outside
- limited availability of Vitamin D rich foods

Vitamin D is considered a hormone. Our bodies can make Vitamin D in our skin when it is exposed to sunlight.

Recommendations to Improve Vitamin D Health

Limited exposure to the sun: In sunny weather, your body can make sufficient Vitamin D in just a few minutes of midday sun exposure without sun screen. Balance this recommendation with that of dermatologists who caution against too much direct sun exposure to avoid risks of skin damage and skin cancer.

Dietary intake: Diet alone can rarely provide enough Vitamin D, found nearly exclusively in fatty fish such as salmon and cod.

Supplement suggestion: Supplements can be a useful alternative.

- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends a daily intake of 400 IU per day of Vitamin D during the first year of life beginning in the first few days of life.
- The Institute of Medicine recommends that children and adolescents should have a daily intake of at least 600 IU per day.
- Everyone should consult their primary care professional to determine the correct amount of Vitamin D they should be taking.

What supplements should I give my children?

Vitamin D is readily available by itself in child-friendly forms, such as gummy vitamins or liquid. Unlike calcium supplements, which are not absorbed if taken in doses greater than 500 mg at one time, a daily dose of Vitamin D can be taken all at once, so it need be given only once daily. Children's multivitamins contain between 60 and 400 IU of Vitamin D. Taking several multivitamins each day to get more Vitamin D is not a good idea, because too much of other vitamins (such as Vitamin A) can be harmful.

This information is brought to you as part of World Pediatric Bone and Joint (PB&J) Day, celebrated on Oct. 19. www.usbji.org/rd/?WorldPB&JDay

World PB&J Day is part of Bone and Joint Health National Awareness Week, Oct. 12-20. The USBJI is part of the worldwide Bone and Joint Decade, and its purpose is to provide a forum for all stakeholders concerned with musculoskeletal health, resulting in multi-disciplinary programs to raise awareness, improve education, and increase research.

Representatives from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, the Pediatric Orthopaedic Society of North America, and Shriners Hospitals for Children® participated in the development of this information.