

Vitamin D and COVID-19

Many of us will be spending more time indoors whilst following the Government's advice on how to tackle the corona virus emergency and slow down the spread of infection through the population. This means we won't be able to benefit from the sunlight to make enough vitamin D.

Vitamin D is extremely important for keeping teeth and bones healthy, helping our nerves and muscles to work properly and maintaining a healthy immune system. Having enough vitamin D in the body, helps to prevent Rickets (in children) and Osteomalacia (in Adults).

Most of the vitamin D our body needs is made by the action of sunlight on the skin. Very little is available through the diet as only some foods contain vitamin D and these would need to be eaten in large quantities to meet daily requirements. Foods which contain vitamin D include oily fish (i.e. mackerel, sardines, pilchards, trout, salmon, herrings, kippers, eel and whitebait), eggs, fortified breakfast cereals, mushrooms, evaporated milk, dried milk powder and fortified margarine.

To prevent deficiency, Public Health England (PHE) has advised those staying indoors for most of the day to take a **10micrograms (400 IU) of vitamin D3 supplement daily.**

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/if-youre-at-very-high-risk-from-coronavirus/>

Children, Adults and Older People

- Take a supplement of **10 micrograms (400 IU)** of vitamin D3 daily
- If you are able to, spend 15-20minutes in the sunlight between 11am - 3pm, without sunscreen and with some skin exposed, daily. Those with darker skin, may need a little more time in the sun. It is important to not let the skin redden or burn.
- Include a vitamin D containing food in your diet everyday

Vitamin D3 supplements are widely available from supermarkets, local community pharmacists or online for a small cost.

Pregnant and Lactating Women

- All pregnant and lactating women are advised to take a daily dose of **10 micrograms (400IU)** of vitamin D3.
- In Bradford and Airedale, Healthy Start vitamins for women (containing folic acid, vitamin C and vitamin D) are given free to all pregnant women throughout the whole of their pregnancy. For more information, speak to your midwife or visit



<https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/healthy-start-vouchers/healthy-start-vitamins/> for more information.

Babies and Children under 5 years

The Department of Health advises all children to take vitamin supplements till they are 5 years old. As part of the Bradford Universal Supplementation Policy, all children from birth to 6 months are given free Healthy Start vitamins containing vitamins A, C and D. After 6 months, some children who are at high risk of developing vitamin D deficiency will continue to receive free vitamins until they are 2 years old. Some children will be signposted to the Healthy Start Scheme. If eligible, they will continue receiving free vitamins until they are 4 years old. The Healthy Start vitamin drops can also be purchased from your local health centre and some local chemists for a small cost. For more information, speak to your Health Visitor and visit <https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/healthy-start-vouchers/healthy-start-vitamins/> for more information.



For more information about vitamin D, visit

<https://www.bradford.gov.uk/health/improve-your-childs-health/vitamin-d/>

<https://www.bradford.gov.uk/media/1910/vitamin-d-leaflet.pdf>

<https://www.bradford.gov.uk/media/3684/w34320-health-start-vitamins-leaflet-ante-natal-draft-1.pdf>

<https://www.bradford.gov.uk/media/3679/w34320-vitamin-d-leaflet-final-hv.pdf>