



## Patient Information

# Vitamin D in Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

It is recommended that all pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers and breastfed babies have a supplement of Vitamin D.

### Why?

Vitamin D is essential for healthy bones, teeth and muscles. It also helps strengthen the immune system. The main source of Vitamin D is from sunlight and in the UK the sunlight is not strong enough for our skin to make enough Vitamin D especially in autumn and winter.

When babies and children don't get enough Vitamin D it increases their risk of a condition called Rickets which affects bone development and their ability to fight off infections.

The amount of Vitamin D in breastmilk depends on: the mothers Vitamin D intake, their ability to absorb Vitamin D and their own body stores.

Some mothers are deficient in Vitamin D, which is why it is recommended that breastfed babies have a supplement.

### How much Vitamin D do you need to take?

- Pregnant mothers: 10 micrograms once per day
- Breastfeeding mothers: 10 micrograms once per day
- Breastfed babies from birth until at least a year should have Vitamin D drops: 8.5-10 micrograms once per day

Vitamin D is an additive within formula milk so if your baby is having more than 500ml of formula per day they do not need to take extra Vitamin D.

### Is it safe?

Taking a supplement of Vitamin D is safe, but if your baby is having other vitamins they may already be having Vitamin D, so check with your Midwife, Doctor or Health Visitor.



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Make sure the Vitamin D you give to your baby or child is appropriate for their age, this is usually sold in liquid drops.

## How do I give Vitamin D to my breastfed baby?

Check the instructions for the amount to give, as it will vary between brands.

Vitamin D for babies is in liquid form so you can either drop it onto the nipple just before baby latches onto the breast or give it on a sterilised spoon with baby in an upright position.

## Where do I buy Vitamin D?

Vitamin D can be bought from pharmacies, supermarkets and online.

If you are entitled to [Healthy Start vouchers](#) you can get free Vitamin D supplements, talk to your Midwife, Health Visitor or Family Nurse who will be able to tell you where to get them.

## Further Information

Healthy Start [www.healthystart.nhs.uk](http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk)

NHS, 2016. The New Guidelines on Vitamin D, what you need to know.  
<https://www.nhs.uk/news/food-and-diet/the-new-guidelines-on-vitamin-d-what-you-need-to-know/>

NICE, 2014. Vitamin D: Increasing supplement use in at risk groups, Public Health guidelines (PH%), London, Nice.

SACN 2016. Vitamin D and Health.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sacn-vitamin-d-and-health-report>

The Breastfeeding Network, Vitamin D and Breastfeeding.  
<https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/vitamind/>

UNICEF UK BFI, 2017. Statement on Vitamin D supplementation for breastfed babies. <http://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2017/01/Vitamin-D-supplementation-for-breastfed-babies-Unicef-UK-Statement.pdf>



# Vitamin D in Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

Smoking will not be permitted on any NHS site in England. Smoking will not be permitted within any of our buildings or anywhere outside on our sites. Smoking facilities will not be provided. Please be considerate of others when vaping in hospital grounds.

**This information sheet is available in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 01793 604031 or email [gwh.pals@nhs.net](mailto:gwh.pals@nhs.net)**

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