

VITAMIN D

Maintaining Bone Density over Age 50

A supplement is recommended



Vitamin D plays a role in keeping you healthy in many ways. It helps:

- Promote healthy bones and teeth;
- Prevent osteoporosis, a disease where bone loss occurs without symptoms; and,
- Reduce the risk of falls and bone fractures in older adults.

Sources of vitamin D

Vitamin D is called the sunshine vitamin because it is produced in a person's skin through exposure to the sun's rays. In Newfoundland and Labrador, the sun is strongest from April to September. The sun creates vitamin D but, it also stimulates the development of certain skin cancers. Therefore, sunlight is not recommended as the main source of vitamin D.

Foods naturally rich in vitamin D include eggs and fatty fish such as salmon, mackerel, sardines and tuna. Some foods contain added vitamin D such as milk, some soy beverages and margarine.

Vitamin D supplement is recommended

As you age, you produce less vitamin D from sunshine and may not absorb as much from food.

For adequate vitamin D intake, *Canada's Food Guide* recommends adults over age 50 drink two cups of milk (or fortified soy beverage) daily and take a daily vitamin D supplement of 400 IU.

Speak with your pharmacist about choosing the right vitamin D supplement that does not interfere with any medication or other supplements you may be taking.

Exercise helps prevent bone loss

Along with healthy eating and getting enough vitamin D, exercising regularly can help prevent bone loss and improve balance and coordination, which helps prevent falls.

Be sure to check with your doctor before beginning a new exercise program.

For a copy of *Canada's Food Guide*,
visit: www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide
or call: **1-866-225-0709**

For more information regarding vitamin D,
visit: www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/vitamin/vita-d-eng.php#a15

