

June 2017

# Senior Health and Wellness Newsletter

Kentucky Department for Aging and Independent Living



## Are You Getting Enough Vitamin D?

As adults age their nutritional needs change. The body uses nutrients differently and often needs more of certain nutrients. One of those nutrients is Vitamin D.

Vitamin D is nutrient known as the “sunshine vitamin.” Vitamin D is a hormone your body can convert from sunlight after it hits unprotected skin. The problem is, after fall, winter and spring many older adults are left deficient of Vitamin D due to decreased exposure to the sun.

Vitamin D aids in bone health and reduces the risk of cancer, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and auto-immune diseases. Although an abundant amount of Vitamin D is received from the sun, it is still estimated that 40-75% of people are deficient.

Just ten to fifteen minutes of direct sun light on your face, arms and legs a couple times a week can help you reach your Vitamin D goals. Don't forget your sun screen. After your 10 minutes of direct sun light add your sunscreen to avoid over exposure.



Vitamin D is found naturally in only a few foods. Many foods may be fortified with Vitamin D. Usually Calcium rich foods are fortified with Vitamin D to help the body better absorb the Calcium found in the food. The intestines need Vitamin D in order to absorb Calcium efficiently.

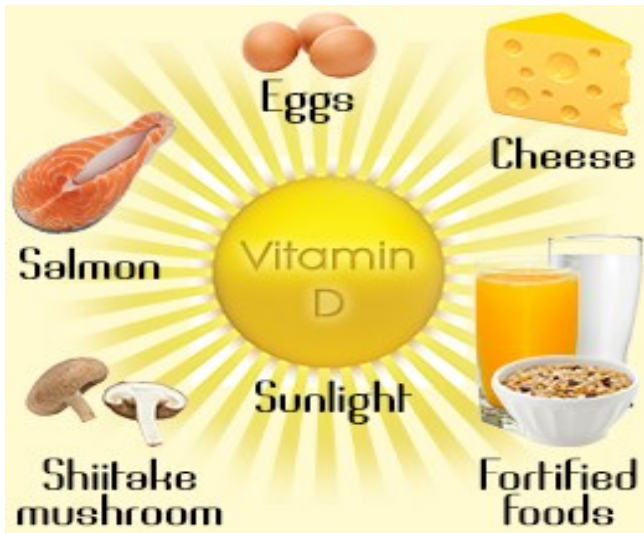
Good food sources of Vitamin D includes; fortified dairy, yogurts, cereals, and fatty fish like Salmon, Trout, Mackerel, Halibut and Swordfish. There are also small amounts of Vitamin D in mushrooms and eggs. With limited sun exposure from sunscreens and limited availability in food, it is easy to become deficient in Vitamin D.

# got vitamin D?

Low Vitamin D is associated with decreased bone mass and osteoporosis. Without vitamin D bones can become brittle and prone to fracture.

It is recommended in the 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans that adults 51+ need 600IU each day and adults 71+ need 800 IU each day.

Even with sun exposure and eating good sources of Vitamin D some individuals may still be deficient. See your doctor and they can check to see if you are deficient in Vitamin D and recommend a supplement if needed.



References:

<http://www.webmd.com/diet/features/are-you-getting-enough-vitamin-d> "Are You Getting Enough Vitamin D"

<http://www.eatright.org> "What is Vitamin D?", "Special Nutrients Needs of Older Adults"

<https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015> "Dietary Guidelines 2015"

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It is important to be checked for a Vitamin D deficiency before taking supplements.

Vitamin D is a Fat-Soluble vitamin which means the vitamin can build up in the body and is not as easily excreted. Having too much Vitamin D from supplements can cause harm. However, there is no fear of overdosing from the sun. Your body regulates how much Vitamin D it makes from the sun.

**Be Careful!**

**Avoid extended exposure to sunlight without sunscreen.**