

Vitamin D Supplement for Babies and Young Children



Why is vitamin D important?

Vitamin D is important for developing and maintaining strong bones. It also helps prevent rickets in childhood, and may help protect against long-term diseases like some cancers, diabetes and immune disorders.

How much vitamin D does my baby need?

Every baby needs 400 International Units (IU) of vitamin D each day. All babies and young children who are fully or partially breastfed need a vitamin D supplement of 400 IU each day.

Vitamin D supplements should continue until your baby is 24 months old **or** until they are eating a variety of foods and drinking 2 cups (500 mL) of homogenized milk per day.

Can a breastfeeding mom take a vitamin D supplement instead of giving it to her child?

Breastmilk supplies a small amount of vitamin D to your baby, but the amount depends on the mother's intake and stores of vitamin D. There is no guarantee that her breastmilk will have enough vitamin D for her baby. Current recommendations suggest that giving a vitamin D supplement directly to the child is safer and more effective.

Vitamin D intake from food and supplements should stay below 4000 IU per day for adults 19 years and over.

If you have made the informed decision to feed your baby formula, talk to your health care provider or call the Health Unit to find out if your baby needs extra vitamin D.

For more information on infant feeding and informed decision making, call 1-800-660-5853 ext. 2467 or visit www.healthunit.org

