



Vitamin D for babies

Why do babies need vitamin D?

Vitamin D is a nutrient that helps your body absorb and use calcium for strong bones and teeth. If babies don't get enough vitamin D, they can get a disease called rickets (soft and weak bones). Vitamin D also helps muscles, nerves and the immune system work properly.

How much vitamin D does my baby need each day?

It's important to get enough Vitamin D, but too much can cause health problems. The daily amount of vitamin D from food and supplements is shown below.

Age	Aim for	Stay below
0-6 months	400 IU (10 µg)	1000 IU (25 µg)
6-12 months	400 IU (10 µg)	1500 IU (38 µg)

IU = international units; µg = microgram

How can my baby get enough vitamin D?

Babies fed human milk (breast milk)

Give a 400 IU (10 µg) vitamin D supplement daily. Start at birth and continue as long as your baby is fed any amount of human milk.

Babies fed formula

Babies who only drink formula do not need a vitamin D supplement. Formula has vitamin D added to it.

Babies 9-12 months old fed cow's milk

After 9 to 12 months of age, you may choose to give pasteurized homogenized (3.25% M.F.) cow's milk to your baby. Babies who drink both formula and cow's milk or only cow's milk do not need a vitamin D supplement. Cow's milk has vitamin D added to it.

Do some babies need more vitamin D?

Yes, the Canadian Pediatric Society suggests a higher amount of vitamin D for babies at risk of deficiency. A health care provider can assess whether your baby needs more vitamin D.

What should I look for when choosing a vitamin D supplement for my baby?

- Choose a single liquid vitamin D supplement that provides 400 IU (10 µg) per dose unless advised differently by your health care provider. Most babies do not need a multivitamin
- Look for a Natural Product Number (NPN) on the product label. A NPN means the supplement meets Health Canada's safety standards for natural health products

Talk to a dietitian, pharmacist or your health care provider if you have questions about what vitamin D supplement to choose.

How do I give my baby the vitamin D supplement?

- Always check the vitamin D supplement label to confirm the dose and follow the instructions
 - Supplements vary. For example, your baby may need one milliliter (mL) or just one drop to get 400 IU of vitamin D
- Give only one dose per day

Always keep supplements out of reach of children

How can I remember to give my baby vitamin D?

- **Set daily reminders:** Use your phone or an alarm to remind you

- **Make it a habit:** Give vitamin D at the same time each day, like with a morning feeding
- **Keep it in a place you will see it:** For example, put the vitamin D in the same spot as you feed your baby

Should I take a high dose of vitamin D so my baby will get enough through my milk?

No. Taking too much vitamin D can be harmful to your health.

Supplements with safe amounts of vitamin D do not raise the vitamin D level in your human milk enough to meet your baby's needs.

Can my baby get vitamin D from the sun?

During the summer months, our bodies can make vitamin D when we're outside and the sun is on our bare skin. Babies are very sensitive to ultraviolet (UV) radiation and heat so it's safest to keep babies younger than 12 months out of direct sun. Do not rely on sun exposure for your baby to get vitamin D.

For more information

- [HealthlinkBC File 68n Vitamin D and your health](#)
- [HealthlinkBC File 69c Baby's first foods](#)
- Coverage for vitamin D supplements for eligible babies: [First Nations Health Benefits](#)

For nutrition information, call **8-1-1** to speak with a registered dietitian.

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