










# Vitamin D supplements are essential for bone and muscle health

People in Ireland do not get enough vitamin D from their diet or from the effect of sunlight on their skin. The Department of Health recommends vitamin D supplements for everyone. The amount you need depends on your age, skin tone, your situation and the time of year.



## Recommended daily vitamin D supplements

	 How much per day	 When to take
 <b>Infants</b> 0–12 months	5 micrograms (µg)/200 IU	All year round if breastfed exclusively <u>or</u> if taking less than 300ml of infant formula per day
 <b>Children</b> 1–4 years	5 micrograms (µg)/200 IU	During the winter months (Halloween to St Patrick’s day)
 <b>Children</b> 5–12 years	10 micrograms (µg)/400 IU	During the winter months (Halloween to St Patrick’s day) <u>or</u> all year round for those with reduced sun exposure or darker skin tone
 <b>Teenagers and adults</b>	15 micrograms (µg)/600 IU	During the winter months (Halloween to St Patrick’s day) <u>or</u> all year round for those with reduced sun exposure or darker skin tone <u>and</u> every day during pregnancy
 <b>Older adults</b> Over 65 years	15 micrograms (µg)/600 IU	All year round

Check with your pharmacist or healthcare professional to ensure that you are taking the right supplement.



## Did you know?

Vitamin D is added to infant formula so a supplement is only needed if your baby drinks less than 300ml per day.



If pregnant, remember to take a vitamin D supplement every day.



Older adults need a supplement all year round.



People with darker skin or reduced sun exposure need a supplement all year round.



## How do we get vitamin D?

We get vitamin D from three main sources.



### Sunlight

**Our bodies make Vitamin D by the action of sunlight on our skin.**

**Always** protect yourself from strong sunlight to prevent skin cancer. Our bodies can still make vitamin D from sunlight even when using sun cream, wearing a hat and protecting our skin from sunburn during the summer months. However, in the winter months sunlight is not strong enough to make Vitamin D.



### Food

**Small amounts of vitamin D can be found naturally in some foods like fresh and tinned oily fish (such as salmon, mackerel, trout, kippers and sardines) and eggs.**

Many fortified foods now include vitamin D, such as margarine and low fat spreads. Other foods are fortified with vitamin D, including some breakfast cereals, milks, yogurts, plant based drinks and powdered milks. The amount of vitamin D in these products varies, so it's important to check the label. Often the amount of vitamin D added is quite small, so it is important that you still take the recommended supplement.



### Vitamin D supplements

**At different life stages we need more vitamin D than we get from food and sun exposure, especially during the winter months.**

See previous table for your recommended vitamin D supplement amount.