

Guidance for GPs: Vitamin D supplementation In At Risk Groups

This information is intended to provide guidance for health professionals in Milton Keynes regarding the provision of Vitamin D supplements in response to the report issued by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) in July 2016 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sacn-vitamin-d-and-health-report>

Who is Vitamin D supplementation recommended for?

The new advice from Public Health England is that adults, children and infants should consider taking a daily supplement containing 10mcg of vitamin D, particularly during autumn and winter.

People who have a higher risk of vitamin D deficiency are being advised to take a supplement all year round.

SACN's review concluded that these at-risk groups include people whose skin has little or no exposure to the sun, like those in care homes, or people who cover their skin when they are outside.

People with dark skin, from African, African-Caribbean and South Asian backgrounds, may also not get enough vitamin D from sunlight in the summer. They should consider taking a supplement all year round as well.

Advice for patients

All patients should be given lifestyle advice to help them get enough vitamin D.

Sunlight

Exposure to sunlight is where we obtain most of our vitamin D. Patients should be advised that this should be unprotected exposure. However, they should cover up or apply sun screen before the skin becomes red or begins to burn. Sunbeds are not a recommended source of vitamin D. Application of sunscreen will block the UVB rays and prevent the formation of vitamin D. However, patients should be warned of the risks of skin cancer from prolonged unprotected exposure to the sun.

Diet

It may be difficult to get enough vitamin D from the diet alone. Vitamin D is naturally present in small amounts in oily fish, eggs and meat. Some food is fortified with vitamin D such as some breakfast cereals, margarine, soya and dairy products, powdered milks and low fat spreads.

Prescribe or Purchase?

- Those women and children who qualify for Healthy Start can obtain vitamins free of charge. Women qualify for Healthy Start if they are at least 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under four years old **and** they or their family get:
 - Income Support
 - Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, or
 - Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, or
- Child Tax Credit (but not Working Tax Credit unless their family is receiving Working Tax Credit run-on only*) **and** has an annual family income of £16,190 or less (2014/15).

They also qualify if they are under 18 and pregnant, even if they don't get any of the above benefits or tax credits.

All other patients should be advised to purchase suitable OTC vitamins (as below).

Dosage and Products

Group	Dosage	Product
Pregnant & breastfeeding	10 micrograms (400iu) daily	<p>Healthy Start Women's Vitamin tablets containing recommended amounts of Vitamin D are available free of charge for eligible patients from designated centres on presentation of Healthy Start (green) Vouchers</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Healthy Start vitamins http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/for-health-professionals/vitamins/ 2) Eligibility http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/healthy-start-vouchers/do-i-qualify/ 3) Locating designated centres http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/healthy-start-vouchers/healthy-start-vitamins/ <p>see "How to get Healthy Start vitamins" and follow link for England and type in post code to find health centres in the area providing Healthy Start Vitamins. However, they are ONLY available from the MK Children's Centres – not health centres.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>Those patients not eligible for Healthy Start vitamins may purchase over the counter (OTC) pregnancy multivitamins which contain both folic acid and vitamin D</p> <p>(Caution: Advise only to use Vitamin D products that do not contain Vitamin A)</p>
Over 65s	10 micrograms (400iu) daily	<p>If at high risk of osteoporosis prescribe, as usual, a Calcium & Vitamin D combined preparation e.g. Adcal D3 1 tablet twice a day (a licensed product containing 10micrograms colecalciferol)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Otherwise</p> <p>Recommend purchase of an OTC product containing 10mcg (400iu) vitamin D from pharmacies or health food shops</p>
People who are not exposed to much sun	10 micrograms (400iu) daily	Recommend purchase of an OTC product containing 10mcg (400iu) vitamin D from pharmacies or health food shops
<p>Infants from birth to 1 year of age</p> <p>Children aged 1 to 4 years</p> <p>(Note: those infants who are fed infant formula will not need vitamin drops until they are receiving less than 500ml of infant formula a day, as these products are fortified with vitamin D)</p>	<p>8.5 to 10 micrograms (340 - 400iu) daily</p> <p>10 micrograms (400iu) daily</p>	<p>Healthy Start Children's Vitamin drops containing recommended amounts of Vitamin D are available free of charge for eligible patients, from designated centres on presentation of Healthy Start (green) Vouchers</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Healthy Start vitamins http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/for-health-professionals/vitamins/ 2) Eligibility http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/healthy-start-vouchers/do-i-qualify/ 3) Locating designated centres http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/healthy-start-vouchers/healthy-start-vitamins/ <p>see "How to get Healthy Start vitamins" and follow link for England and type in post code to find health centres in the area providing Healthy Start Vitamins. However, they are ONLY available from the MK Children's Centres – not health centres.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>For those patients not eligible for Healthy Start vitamins, parents may purchase over the counter (OTC) Abidec multivitamin drops (NB Dalivit contains a higher amount of vitamin A. Parents should be advised to stick to the recommended dosing regimens)</p>