

## Vitamin D Fact Sheet

Vitamin D deficiency is extremely common in the UK and has been linked to the following health issues:

- Poor immune function - getting sick often
- Low mood & depression
- Fatigue & tiredness
- Constipation
- Low bone mineral density
- Hormonal imbalance
- IBS

### *What is vitamin D?*

- Vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin, meaning it's absorbed by the body through fatty tissue and then stored in these tissues or the liver
- It is made in the body from cholesterol when the skin is exposed to natural sunlight (without sunscreen)
- Unlike most vitamins, vitamin D functions more like a hormone: every cell in your body has a receptor that allows it to absorb the mineral

### *What does vitamin D do?*

- activates cells that **fight infection** and **reduce inflammation**
- maintains and builds **bone strength** by aiding the absorption of calcium from your gut and kidneys,

### *What foods contain vitamin D?*

Vitamin D is found mainly in animal products such as:

- Fish such as salmon, mackerel, sardines and tuna
- Eggs
- Milk, butter and cheese
- Fortified foods
- Mushrooms

If you are **vegetarian** or **vegan**, it's likely that you'll need to supplement to get the right level of vitamin D.

### *Other vitamins linked to Vitamin D*

- **Magnesium** assists in the activation of vitamin D in the body

- Vitamin D stimulates the absorption of **calcium**, which is important for bone health

#### ***Vitamin D deficiency symptoms - who is at greatest risk?***

- Anyone who lives in the northern hemisphere - that includes the UK
- If you spend most of your time indoors
- Those who eat very little fish or dairy

#### ***What are the UK guidelines?***

The NHS recommends that from October to March, everyone should consider supplementing with Vitamin D. For children the advice is:

- breastfed babies from birth to 1 year of age should be given a daily supplement containing 8.5 to 10 mg of vitamin D
- formula-fed babies **shouldn't** be given a vitamin D supplement until they're having less than 500ml (about a pint) of infant formula a day, as infant formula is fortified with vitamin D
- children aged 1 to 4 yrs old should be given a daily supplement containing 10 mg of vitamin D

#### ***The link between vitamin D and overall health:***

Some studies have shown that low levels of vitamin D have been linked to a number of medical conditions including:

- Heart conditions
- Autoimmune disease
- Type 2 diabetes
- Depression
- Dementia and Alzheimer's

It is not possible to say that Vitamin D deficiency *causes* any of the list above, but there is a scientific rationale to keeping your vitamin D levels optimised.

***If you have any questions about Vitamin D or want to book a health screen with Dr Shilpa, book an appointment at [www.privategp.org/book](http://www.privategp.org/book) or call 0203 303 0326.***