

# PREVENTING VITAMIN D DEFICIENCY IN TODDLERS GUIDANCE & TIPS FOR PARENTS



## Foods

- Vitamin D is found in only a few foods: oily fish is the best source and eggs and meat contain small amounts.
- Some foods are fortified with vitamin D – formula milks, margarine and some yogurts and breakfast cereals.

## Sunlight

- Most of your toddler's vitamin D is made in his/her skin when outside in the sunlight in the summer months (April-September).
- Sunscreen will stop your toddler making vitamin D in his/her skin so allow your toddler to play outside without sunscreen at times when he/she is unlikely to burn.
- The amount of time toddlers can spend outside in the sunshine without burning will vary depending on their skin type.

## Vitamin D Deficiency

- Babies, toddlers and mothers with dark skins living in the UK are the most likely to become deficient in vitamin D if they do not take a daily supplement of vitamin D.
- Mothers who cover most of their skin when outside are most at risk of vitamin D deficiency.
- Babies and toddlers with very low amounts of vitamin D could have fits or get rickets – a disease when bones become soft and misshapen.

- Low vitamin D levels may make toddlers more likely to get diabetes and diseases later in life such as heart disease, multiple sclerosis and arthritis.

## Supplements of Vitamin D

- Your toddler is not guaranteed to get enough vitamin D from foods and sunshine alone, so give him/her a vitamin supplement containing 10µg vitamin D every day.
- The Healthy Start children's vitamin drops contain vitamins A, C and D.
- Pregnant and breastfeeding mothers should take a daily supplement of 10µg (400IU) vitamin D every day. This is to make sure your baby grows and develops in your womb and is born with sufficient stores of vitamin D to make use of in the first few months of life.

## Healthy Start Vitamin Vouchers

- If you are receiving Healthy Start vouchers then you will also get Healthy Start vitamin vouchers every eight weeks to exchange for free Healthy Start vitamin drops for your infant or toddler. Ask your health visitor where to get them.
- Pregnant and breastfeeding women signed up for Healthy Start also get vitamin vouchers to exchange for free Healthy Start tablets with vitamin D.



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