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## Vitamin D for Babies and Toddlers

### Babies: Birth to 12 months

If your baby drinks **breast milk, or breast milk and formula, give 400 IU** of vitamin D supplement every day.

If your baby drinks **only formula**, they **do not need** a vitamin D supplement.

### Toddlers: 12 to 24 months

If your toddler drinks **breast milk and less than 500 mL homogenized (3.25%) cow's milk, give 400 IU** of vitamin D supplement every day.

If your toddler drinks **500 mL of cow's milk** each day, they **do not need** a vitamin D supplement.

If your toddler drinks **less than 500 mL** of cow's milk, call 8-1-1 and speak with a Dietitian at HealthLinkBC or go to [www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthyeating](http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthyeating) to send an email.

While 500 mL of cow's milk a day is important for vitamin D intake, drinking more than 750 mL (24 oz) is too much.  
Too much milk fills a child's tummy and leaves little room for healthy foods.  
Children who drink too much milk are at higher risk for iron deficiency.

### Is it safe for my baby or toddler to get vitamin D from the sun?

- **No, it is not safe** due to the risk of skin cancer.
- For more information on sun safety for babies and toddlers, see HealthLink BC's webpage, "Sun Safety for Children" and Health Canada's webpage, "Sun Safety Tips for Parents".

## Why is vitamin D important?

- Vitamin D helps build strong bones.
- Children who don't get enough vitamin D can develop a disease called rickets (soft bones).
- The role of vitamin D in preventing other diseases is being studied.

## Which vitamin D supplement should I use?

- Choose a vitamin D3 supplement in a drop format.
- Multivitamins are not recommended unless prescribed by your doctor.
- Vitamin D supplements are sold over-the-counter in pharmacies and some grocery stores.

Look for a **Natural Product Number (NPN)** on supplement bottles. This number tells you that Health Canada finds the product to be safe and useful if you follow the directions on the package.



## How do I give my baby a vitamin D supplement?

- Start a daily routine that allows you to remember to give the drop at the same time each day.
- Read the label carefully to make sure you are giving the right amount. Different brands have different amounts of vitamin D. Choose a product that comes in a dose of 400 IU.

If you are using the supplement that is a **single drop** (400IU):



- Place a drop on nipple or clean finger and let your baby suck it off.
- It is best not to drop directly into your baby's mouth.

If you are using the supplement that is a **1 mL dose** (400IU):



- Hold your baby in a semi-upright position with head supported.
- Place dropper between baby's cheek and the side of your baby's tongue and squeeze slowly, or place vitamin D on a spoon and let your baby suck it off.

*The information on this handout is intended for educational and informational purposes only. It is not intended to replace medical advice, diagnosis or treatment from a physician or other qualified healthcare professional.*

*If you have questions about your child's nutrition call 8-1-1 to speak to a Registered Dietitian at HealthLink BC.*

*If you have questions about your child's health please contact your Public Health Unit to speak to a Public Health Nurse.*

Abbotsford 604-864-3400	Agassiz 604-793-7160	Burnaby 604-918-7605	Chilliwack 604-702-4900	Cloverdale, Surrey 604-575-5100	Guildford, Surrey 604-587-4750
Hope 604-860-7630	Langley 604-539-2900	Maple Ridge 604-476-7000	Mission 604-814-5500	New Westminster 604-777-6740	Newton, Surrey 604-592-2000
North Delta 604-507-5400	North Surrey 604-587-7900	South Delta 604-952-3550	TriCities (Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody) 604-949-7200	White Rock 604-542-4000	

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