

Our Kids Need More Vitamin D!

What can parents do? News from GoodSchoolFood.org

Dear Parents,

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Vitamin D is in the news a lot lately. *Pediatrics*, the medical journal, announced that seven out of ten American children are below the optimum level.¹

The Benefits of Vitamin D

Everyone knows that vitamin D builds strong bones and teeth, but D also helps protect our children from many diseases,² such as TB,³ flu,⁴ ADD⁵, autism.⁵ Also, diabetes strikes young people three times more than ten years ago, and people with low levels of D⁶ get it the most. Sufficient D also makes muscles stronger⁷ and prevents acne.⁸ D deficiency is related to big waists and high blood pressure in teens.⁹ Vitamin D prevents depression¹⁰ and helps brain function,¹¹ so students are happier, learn faster and behave better.

Why Are People Deficient?

Most people are deficient now because we eat less fish and lard, and we spend less time outdoors between 11 am and 1 pm, when ultraviolet B rays can reach us through the atmosphere. People living north of Los Angeles can't make any D in winter, so the D stored in body fat is depleted by the time spring arrives, which is why so many of us get the flu in February and March.¹²

Overweight people store D in body fat and therefore need to get more D each day. Pregnant women need more D for their babies, as much as 6000 IU a day.¹³ People with more skin pigment need supplementation, or up to 10 times more sun exposure to make D.¹⁴

Daily Allowance

Because most of us have dangerously low D in our blood, the FDA's daily allowance of 200 International Units is useless. That is a tenth of what D experts say it should be — 2000 IU per day.¹⁵ I imagine living on a tenth of your income, or eating every tenth day!

Until the FDA raises the daily allowance, school food will only supply a small part of the optimum amount, therefore it's up to us parents to insure our children get enough D. Vitamin D3 is more effective than vitamin D2. D3 is made from fish oil, or lanolin (which has no fishy taste; it's usually a powder inside a capsule so parents can pull apart the capsule and mix the powder into food). D supplementation calls for sufficient dietary calcium, magnesium and other minerals. Anyone with liver or kidney disease, or sarcoidosis, needs medical supervision.¹⁶

Getting Tested

Since deficiency levels vary so widely, your child's doctor can prescribe a *25-OH-D test*. When the results came back, the doctor can recommend the exact amount for your child's daily supplement.

Home Test

If you don't have medical coverage, you can get a \$40 home 'blood spot' 25-OH-D test that hurts no more than pulling a splinter. Go to *GrassrootsHealth.org*, click on "D-Action," and scroll down to the "Join Now" button. This is a 5-year study, but you can buy just one test. Results are sent by email.

Questions?

If you use the home test and want free help in interpreting the results, we are happy to talk with you. Call (707) 939-9999 or email info@goodschoolfood.org.

Information for Your Health Care Provider:

Lifeguards and farmers can't overdose on D because the body only makes what it needs from sunlight. They are the gold standard, with 100 nanograms per milliliter of D. NIH's standard is a third of that, 32 ng/ml. D researchers find the most protection from arthritis, cancer, depression, diabetes, and heart disease *above* 60 ng/ml.¹⁷ The blood level of D rises about 1 ng/ml for each 100 International Units (IU) of D supplementation.¹⁸ For example, if the test shows a blood level of 20 ng/ml, a 150-pound person can reach 60 ng/ml by taking 4000 IU a day (40 x 100). A 112-pound person wanting the same 40 ng/ml gain needs 3,000 IU a day, a 75-pound person needs 2,000 IU. Experts say the largest safe dose is 10,000 IU/ day.¹⁹

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Translated into Spanish by Ligia Booker

Citations

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