



## How do you get enough Vitamin D?

- Our skin makes some Vitamin D from sunlight; but because of our long winters, most Canadians make little or no Vitamin D between October and March and need to get it from other sources.
- As a result, a very important way of getting enough Vitamin D is through the food we eat. This includes foods like egg yolks, liver, and fish such as char, herring, mackerel, salmon, sardine and trout. Eating fish twice a week through healthier cooking methods such as poaching, baking, or barbecuing is a great way to supplement your Vitamin D intake. Vitamin D can also be found in 2-3 servings of milk and/or fortified soy or rice beverage each day.
- In addition to Vitamin D from foods, at minimum most children and adults require a 400 IU supplement daily, but no more than 1,000 IU. Adults over the age of 70 require at minimum an 800 IU supplement daily, but no more than 2,000 IU. For most people, the best supplement is Vitamin D3.

## Who needs Vitamin D testing?

- While there is good scientific evidence that all Albertans need more Vitamin D through foods and supplements, there is no good evidence to support regular blood testing to determine Vitamin D levels for most of us, except in medically necessary cases.
- Medically necessary cases include: those with osteoporosis or other bone-thinning diseases, malabsorption syndromes, renal disease, rickets, or patients taking drugs that affect Vitamin D absorption.

## Why do you need Vitamin D?

- Vitamin D helps our bodies build strong, healthy bones and teeth. It may also lower your risk for heart disease, cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure and other diseases.
- Your body needs Vitamin D to absorb calcium, and without enough calcium, your muscles can cramp, hurt, or feel weak. You may have long-term muscle aches and pains. If you don't get enough Vitamin D throughout your life, you are more likely to have thin and brittle bones (known as osteoporosis) in your later years.

For more information visit [www.myhealth.alberta.ca](http://www.myhealth.alberta.ca)

### Who can I call with questions?

Health Link Alberta 1.866.408.5465

*These recommendations are aligned with Choosing Wisely Canada.*