



Vitamin D for Children in Northern BC

Vitamin D helps to build strong bones and teeth, and supports good health.

The sun and vitamin D

In northern BC, it is hard to make enough vitamin D from the sun because:

- our skin can only make vitamin D during the summer months
- we protect our skin from the sun with clothing, hats, sunscreen, and shade, and
- our skin cannot make vitamin D when it is protected from the sun.

Aim for your child to get enough vitamin D from their diet or a supplement, year round.

How much vitamin D does my child need?

- It is recommended that children over one year of age get 600 International Units (IU) of vitamin D daily, as a total from foods, fluids, and/or supplements.
- This recommendation assumes minimal sun exposure.
- A 400 IU supplement can help children to meet their vitamin D needs.

Do children need vitamin D supplements?

- It can be hard to meet vitamin D needs through diet alone.
- A daily 400 IU liquid vitamin D supplement is recommended for children:
 - who drink breast milk
 - who do not get enough vitamin D from their diet
- A daily vitamin D supplement of 400 IU is considered safe.



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What foods provide vitamin D?

It can be hard to meet vitamin D needs through diet alone, because there are few food sources of vitamin D.

Food	Serving size	Vitamin D
Cow's milk	1 cup (250 mL)	104 IU
Fatty fish (e.g. salmon)	2.5 oz (75 g)	70 – 557 IU
Egg yolks	1 egg	32 IU
Margarine	1 tsp (5 mL)	25 IU
Fortified soy beverage *	1 cup (250 mL)	87 IU



- Store-bought cow's milk is fortified with vitamin D and is the main food source of vitamin D for many Canadian children over one year old.
- *Plant-based beverages, such as soy, coconut, almond and rice beverages, may be fortified with vitamin D. However, these beverages are low in most other nutrients, and are not recommended for children less than two years old.
- Intake of animal milks and plant-based beverages should be less than 3 cups (750 mL) per day, so that children have an appetite for other nutritious foods.
- For more information on vitamin D in foods, see: [Vitamin D and your health](#) – HealthLink BC



Can children get too much vitamin D?

While a 400 IU vitamin D supplement is safe, it is possible to get too much vitamin D.

- Children 1-3 years old should not get more than 2500 IU per day.
- Children 4-8 years old should not get more than 3000 IU per day.
- Children 9 years and older should not get more than 4000 IU per day.

Talk to your health care provider about your child's vitamin D needs.
To speak with a Registered Dietitian at HealthLinkBC, call 811 (or 604-215-8110).



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