



## Vitamin D, the Sunshine Vitamin

Vitamin D is actually more like a hormone than a vitamin and plays a key role in many systems in the body, including:

- Calcium absorption
- Bone and muscle strength
- Immune function
- Cardiovascular function
- Glucose metabolism

Studies have shown strong links between vitamin D intake and protection from cancer and inflammation. Deficiency has also been implicated in several auto-immune conditions and depression.

Vitamin D is only naturally found in a few foods including oily fish like salmon, sardines and mackerel with fish liver oils being the best sources. Smaller amounts are found in beef liver, cheese and egg yolks. Fortified foods containing vitamin D include breakfast cereals, some yoghurts and dairy replacement drinks. It is therefore difficult to achieve optimal vitamin D intake from food sources alone and the major source of vitamin D is sunshine.

Vitamin D is primarily manufactured in the skin on contact with sunshine. In the UK, during the winter months, UV levels are not high enough for us to make vitamin D even with regular time spent outdoors. In the summer, or on holiday, the government's advice is to avoid prolonged sun exposure, to use sun screen and to cover up in order to protect against skin cancer so there are now increasing numbers of people with vitamin D deficiency.

Testing your vitamin D levels is therefore important and supplementation, at the correct dose, can ensure healthy levels of vitamin D are maintained.

For my clients I recommend a reliable test from a pin-prick blood sample, so they can take the test in their own home. I use **Cambridge Nutritional Sciences Ltd** and the test costs £40. For more information please contact me.

References are available on request.

Please note the information given here does not replace any medical advice and it is important to consult a medical practitioner regarding any health concerns.

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