

## What?

Vitamin D is an essential nutrient that works with calcium and phosphorus for healthy bones, muscles and teeth. Research has also shown it plays an important role in supporting our immune system. We make vitamin D under our skin when outside in daylight, this is why Vitamin D is called the 'sunshine' vitamin.

Vitamin D is especially important for breastfed babies, as breast milk does not provide enough of the vitamin for their needs.

## When?

Babies under 12 months need 5 micrograms ( $\mu\text{g}$ ) of vitamin D as a supplement every day from birth if they are:

- Breastfed (irrespective of mum taking a vitamin D supplement)
- have less than 300mls or 10 fluid oz (ounces) of infant formula a day

You should stop giving your child formula milk when they reach 1 year of age.

Babies who are formula fed **do not** require a daily vitamin D supplement if they are having >300ml (about 10 fluid ounces) of infant formula a day\*.

Children aged 1 to 4 need a vitamin D supplement every from **Halloween** (October 31<sup>st</sup>) to **St. Patrick's Day** (March 17<sup>th</sup>)

*\*This is a population-based recommendation for healthy term babies. Some babies who, for example, were born prematurely or who are under on-going medical care may have different vitamin requirements. The specific recommendation of their doctor should be sought and followed in these cases*

# Vitamin D

## How?

Vitamin D supplements for babies are available in pharmacies and some supermarkets. You must ensure they are suitable for babies and contain D3 only.

The correct dose is 5 $\mu\text{g}$ ; the number of drops can vary depending on the supplement you are using.

The World Health Organisation advice is to get 5 to 15 minutes of casual sun exposure to hands, face and arms two to three times a week during summer months.

## Food sources:

- **oily fish eg sardines, herring and mackerel**
- **red meat**
- **liver**
- **egg yolks**
- **UV exposed mushrooms**
- **fortified foods-eg milk, yogurts, cereals (check labels)**

