

Some good sources of calcium



Milk, fortified soy milk



Yogurt (choose low-fat options)



Cheese (choose low-fat options).



Nuts, seeds (e.g. almonds, sesame)



Broccoli



Spinach, kale



Medical, midwifery, and dietitian appointments are available at WHFS.

See our website for nutrition workshops being held this term.

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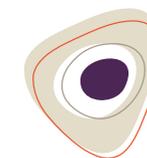
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Womens Health & Family Services (WHFS) is a not-for-profit service for women and their families in Western Australia.

Vitamin D



womens health
& family services

Supporting and empowering women,
families and communities

www.whfs.org.au

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What is vitamin D and why do I need it?

- Vitamin D helps the body to absorb calcium from the diet.
- Calcium is vital for healthy, strong bones and teeth.
- The body makes its own vitamin D when our skin is exposed to sunlight.

Why is vitamin D important?



Getting enough vitamin D prevents rickets (softened and weakened bones) in children.



Vitamin D helps prevent osteoporosis (weak, brittle bones) in adults. It helps reduce the risk of fractures.



Vitamin D helps to improve muscle strength and balance and prevent falls in older people.



It also has a role in boosting immunity (for prevention of colds and flu).

Where is vitamin D found?

Sunlight is our main source of Vitamin D

Dietary intake is not enough to meet daily requirements. So it is important to get some sunlight everyday.

Day-to-day outdoor activities should be enough to get the recommended amounts of vitamin D.

Small amounts of vitamin D can be found in foods such as: milk, soy drinks, eggs, butter, margarine and liver. Small amounts are also in some types of fish (tuna, salmon, sardines, herring, and mackerel).

Are you at risk of vitamin D deficiency?

Risk factors	Examples	Reason for vitamin D deficiency
People who cover up most of their body	Cultural/religious clothing eg veils	Not enough skin exposure to sunlight
People who are inside most of the time	Elderly people, night shift workers, people in prisons	Not enough sunlight exposure
People with darker skin	Some people from African, Caribbean or Aboriginal backgrounds	Darker skin takes longer to make vitamin D so these people need more sun exposure
Older people	People aged 60 years old and above	As we grow older, Vitamin D is made at a slower rate in the skin
Exclusively breast-fed infants	Infants not weaned onto solid foods after 6-7 months	Breast milk is a poor source of vitamin D
Mothers and infants with darker skin	Includes children born in Australia whose mothers have darker skin	Mothers may have had low vitamin D levels during pregnancy
People from Tuberculosis (TB) endemic regions	Migrants and refugees	Anti-tuberculosis therapy lowers vitamin D levels in the body
Some medical conditions	Bowel diseases	Affects the body's ability to make and use vitamin D

How can you improve your vitamin D status?

1. Get enough sunlight on your arms, face, and hands.
2. If you are at risk of vitamin D deficiency, visit your doctor for a blood test and regular check-ups.
3. Take a vitamin D supplement, if you are advised to by your doctor.
4. Ensure a well-balanced diet with a variety of foods.
5. Eat enough calcium and exercise moderately each day to maintain healthy bones.

How much sun exposure is enough?

	Time of year	
	Sept-April	May-August
Length of exposure	Maximum 15 minutes, twice a day	30 minutes most days if UV rating under 3
Time of day	Before 10am or after 3pm	Close to midday
Areas exposed	Face, arms, hands or similar	Face, arms, hands or similar
Sunscreen	Must wear sunscreen between 10am and 3pm*, reapply hourly.	Sun protection may not be necessary during winter months*.

**Suggested exposure times relevant for Perth and South-West Australia. If you are outdoors for long periods of time, have fair skin, or have other skin conditions, sunscreen may be needed outside of these hours.*

Stay safe!

UV rays from the sun can be harmful to your health and can cause skin cancer. If the UV level is rated 3 or above, ensure the following:

- Stay in the shade as much as possible
- Wear clothing to cover skin
- Wear a hat and sunglasses