



## COLBURN GROUP I N S U R A N C E

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# Getting Enough Vitamin D?

*Deficiency can lead to significant health problems*

Vitamin D is essential for maintaining strong bones and preventing a host of other health problems, but an alarming number of people do not get enough of this important vitamin. Yet, getting the proper amount can be as easy as spending a little time in the sun or taking a daily multivitamin.

### Where is it Found?

It is commonly called the "sunshine vitamin" because the body produces vitamin D only when exposed to direct sunlight. However, it is also found in certain foods, including fish, eggs and milk.



### Vitamin D Requirements

Experts recommend that people, especially children, be exposed to 10-15 minutes of direct sunlight daily (without sunscreen). Certain foods do provide vitamin D as well, but it is next to impossible to get enough from diet alone. Another option is vitamin D supplements or one of the many multivitamins that contain it.

### Importance of Vitamin D

Vitamin D helps bones properly absorb calcium, which keeps them strong. In addition, studies indicate that vitamin D could play a role in the prevention and treatment of type 1 and 2 diabetes, hypertension, glucose intolerance and multiple sclerosis.

Traditionally, vitamin D deficiency has been associated with rickets in children, a disease that leads to soft bones and skeletal deformities. In adults, osteomalacia is a classic disease linked to vitamin D deficiency, which results in muscular weakness in addition to weak bones.

Beyond these diseases, more recent research has found that vitamin D deficiency can lead to high blood pressure, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and various cancers. In children, low vitamin D levels can lead to development of these diseases at a much earlier age.

### How is it Measured?

Vitamin D levels can be measured in the blood (in nanograms of vitamin D per milliliter). In a recent study of children, nine percent of U.S. children were vitamin D-deficient (less than 15 ng/mL) and 61 percent had insufficient levels (15-29 ng/mL).

### Did you know...?

A recent study found that 70 percent of American children are not getting enough vitamin D.