



# The Be Fit Minute

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## VITAMIN D

Vitamin D keeps popping up as a hot topic and for good reason: it helps build strong bones and maintain a healthy immune system. It may also help prevent a variety of diseases ... and many Americans do not get enough.

### What Does It Do?

Benefits of Vitamin D are found all over the body. Here are a few places it works to keep you healthy:

- **Your Bones:** it works with calcium to build strong bones and prevent **osteomalacia** and **osteoporosis**.
- **Your Cells, Tissues, and Organs:** it helps keep your **immune system** healthy by aiding in the growth and development of **skin** and **white blood cells**.

The latest research is focusing on its role in chronic diseases like **diabetes**, as well as **colon, prostate** and **breast cancer**.

### Where Can I Get It?

- **Fatty fish** such as salmon, mackerel, sardines, and tuna
- Vitamin D **fortified beverages** such as milk, soy milk, and orange juice *and* **fortified foods** such as yogurt, margarine, and cereal
- From **the sun** (usually 15 minutes of sun exposure at least a few days a week) \*



\*The sun in New England from November through February is not strong enough to provide adequate Vitamin D.

### How Much Do I Need?

In New England, it can be difficult to get adequate amounts from the sun, so it is important to monitor your intake. Both men and women need the same amount of vitamin D.

**Current recommendations for daily intakes are listed to the right.**

Age Group	International Units (IU)
18-70	600
70+	800

**Do I Consume Enough?** Take our brief quiz to find out.

	A	B	C	D
1. The number of cups (8 ounces) of vitamin D fortified milk, orange juice, or other beverages I drink each <b>day</b> is ...	0	1	2-3	4+
2. The total ounces** of fatty fish like salmon, mackerel, sardines or tuna I eat in a <b>week</b> is ...	0	1-3	4-6	7+
** 3 ounces = size of a deck of cards				
3. The number of times a <b>week</b> I take a vitamin D supplement that has 400-1000 IU is ...	0	1-2	3-5	6-7+

**Mostly A's:** (Less than 100 IU/day)

You are not getting enough vitamin D through food or supplements.

**Mostly B's or C's:** (100-600 IU/day)

This is a good start, but you are likely still falling short on your vitamin D intake.

**Mostly D's:** (600+ IU/day)

Your vitamin D intake is likely adequate, based on current vitamin D requirements for healthy individuals. Recently, some experts have recommended vitamin D intakes be increased to 1000 IU/day for adults.

**The upper limit for vitamin D is set at 4000 IU/day. Do not take more than this unless recommended by your doctor.**

This is general advice and not meant to diagnose or treat any conditions. Consult your registered dietitian or doctor before taking any supplements or making any major changes to your diet. **For more information:** schedule an appointment with a registered dietitian (RD) by calling 617.726.2779.