



# The Be Fit Minute

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## VITAMIN D

Vitamin D is an important nutrient and for good reason: it helps build strong bones and maintain a healthy immune system. It may also reduce disease risk ... 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 reduce risk of **osteomalacia** (soft bones) and **osteoporosis** (fragile bones).
- **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 diseases, like **diabetes and cancer**.

### Where Can I Get It?

- **Fatty fish** such as salmon, mackerel, sardines, and tuna
- Vitamin D **fortified beverages** such as milk, plant milks (like almond milk), orange juice *and* **fortified foods** such as yogurt and cereal
- From **the sun** (5 to 30 minutes of sun exposure to the face, arms, legs, or back at least twice a week may be enough)



### 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	Units
18-70	15 mcg (600 IU)
70+	20 mcg (800 IU)

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

	A	B	C
1. The number of cups (8 ounces) of vitamin D fortified milk, orange juice, or other fortified beverages I drink each <b>day</b> is ...	≤1	2-3	4+
2. The total servings* of fatty fish like salmon, mackerel, sardines or tuna I eat in a <b>week</b> is ...	≤1	2-3	4+
* 1 serving = the size of a deck of cards (3 ounces)			
3. The number of times a <b>week</b> I take a vitamin D supplement that has at least 15 to 25 mcg (600-1000 IU) is ...	≤1	2-3	4+

#### **Mostly A:**

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

#### **Mostly B:**

This is a good start, but you may still be falling short on your vitamin D intake, particularly if you are not regularly using fortified products or taking a supplement.

#### **Mostly C:**

Your vitamin D intake may be adequate based on current vitamin D requirements for healthy individuals. Some experts have recommended intakes be increased to 25 mcg (1000 IU)/day for adults. If you are concerned you may be deficient, talk with your doctor about getting your blood level checked.

**The upper limit for vitamin D is set at 100 mcg (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.*