

## Neonatology

# Vitamin D for mothers and families

## Information for parents

The government recommends taking around 10 micrograms (ug) or 400 units of vitamin D (colecalciferol/cholecalciferol) every day. It is important for you and your family to take a supplement with this amount of vitamin D.

Vitamin D regulates the amount of calcium and phosphate in your body. You need calcium and phosphate to keep your bones, teeth and muscles healthy.

## Who needs to take vitamin D supplements?

- babies 0 to 1 year old who are breast fed
- babies 0 to 1 year old who are fed both breast and formula milk
- babies born early (preterm) who are formula fed
- children over 1 year and all adults

Note:

- babies born early (preterm) who are breast fed might need more than 400 units per day – your baby's care team will tell you if your baby needs this
- babies born on time (term) who are only fed on formula milk **do not** need to take a vitamin D supplement

## Where can I buy vitamin D supplements?

You can buy vitamin D tablets or drops from a pharmacist or supermarket for any member of your family. Drops are better for babies and young children.

You may be able to get free vitamin supplements if you're eligible for Healthy Start. Visit [www.healthystart.nhs.uk](http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk) for more information.

## Breastfeeding mothers

Breastfeeding mothers should take a vitamin D supplement and any others that your healthcare professional prescribes for you. Taking a vitamin D supplement will not affect the amount of vitamin D in your breast milk. However, it does help your bones and teeth to stay healthy and do the same for any babies you have in the future.

You do not need to take any other vitamins and we do not recommend taking large doses of over-the-counter medications. You can get all of the other vitamins and minerals you need by eating a varied and balanced diet.

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## How do I give feedback about my visit?

We want to hear your **suggestions** or **comments**. Your feedback helps us provide the best service. You can always speak to a member of staff.

You can also contact the **patient advice and liaison service (PALS)** on **020 3312 7777** (10.00 to 16.00, Monday to Friday excluding bank holidays) or email at [imperial.pals@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.pals@nhs.net). The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or questions and they can help solve problems.

You can make a complaint by ringing **020 3312 1337 / 1349** or emailing [tr.Complaints@nhs.net](mailto:tr.Complaints@nhs.net). The address is Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street, London W2 1NY.

## Other ways to read this leaflet

Please email us at [imperial.communications@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.communications@nhs.net) if you need this leaflet in a different format. This could be large print, Easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in a different language.

Neonatology  
Published: December 2025  
Review date: December 2028  
Reference no: 5334  
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