

# NUTRIFAX<sup>©</sup>

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## Vitamin D: The Sunshine Vitamin

**V**itamin D is known as the sunshine vitamin, because the body makes the vitamin after the sun hits your skin. Vitamin D assists the body in absorbing calcium and boosting your immune system, which in turn make strong bones. It also helps in the prevention of diseases such as cancer, osteoporosis, and rickets.

The Academy of Pediatrics recommends that infants, children, and adolescents double their intake of Vitamin D through either food or supplements. Increased Vitamin D intake can prevent and treat rickets, a bone softening disease. Cases of rickets continue to be reported in children and adolescents in the United States.

**O**ver use of sunscreen can cause a deficiency in vitamin D. Even with supplements and diet a person may not receive the recommended amount of Vitamin D without sunlight. As little as 5 – 10 minutes a day in the sun can provide the recommended daily requirements.

**B**y the end of the winter 30 to 55% of people are vitamin D deficient. This is likely due to lack of exposure to sunlight. It is suggested to go for the first 5 to 10 minutes of sun exposure without sunscreen and then apply as desired.



### High Vitamin D Foods

- Oily fish such as tuna, catfish, salmon and sardines in all forms, including canned and cooked.
- Milk, dairy and soy products **fortified** with vitamin D.
- Ready to eat cereals **fortified** with vitamin D.
- Fruit juices **fortified** with Vitamin D and calcium.



### Vitamin D Smart Tips

- Wear light, protective clothing.
- Allow 5 – 10 minutes of sun exposure before applying sunscreen.
- Eat fish like tuna, salmon, and mackerel.
- Eat foods fortified with Vitamin D.
- Read the Nutrition facts panel on food for Vitamin D content.



**Food and Nutrition Services can assist in providing nutrition information. Call 703-813-4800 and ask for a Registered Dietitian.**