



How to maintain your vitamin D levels – Information for adults following treatment of vitamin D deficiency or low vitamin D levels.

LONG TERM VITAMIN D SUPPLEMENTS ARE NO LONGER RECOMMENDED ON PRESCRIPTION IN DERBYSHIRE AND THEREFORE NEED TO BE PURCHASED IN LINE WITH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ADVICE

- **Take a regular vitamin D supplement.** These are available to buy from pharmacies, health food shops or supermarkets. Supplements containing 1000 units (25 micrograms) are considerably cheaper to purchase than those containing 400 units (10 micrograms) or 800 units (20 micrograms) and are suitable for your situation. These typically cost less than £1 to buy for a month's supply. Please note some women may be able to get vitamin supplements containing vitamin D free of charge if they are pregnant or breastfeeding via the Healthy Start scheme –your health visitor or local pharmacy can provide more information.
- **Get regular exposure to sunlight.** It is important that sun exposure is as safe as possible. Most people can make enough vitamin D from being out in the sun daily for short periods with their forearms, hands or lower legs uncovered and without sunscreen from late March or early April to the end of September, especially from 11am to 3pm. It's not known exactly how much time is needed in the sun to make enough vitamin D to meet the body's requirements. This is because there are a number of factors that can affect how vitamin D is made, such as your skin colour or how much skin you have exposed. But you should be careful not to burn in the sun, so take care to cover up, or protect your skin with sunscreen, before your skin starts to turn red or burn. People with dark skin, such as those of African, African-Caribbean or south Asian origin, will need to spend longer in the sun to produce the same amount of vitamin D as someone with lighter skin.
- **Eat foods that contain higher amounts of vitamin D** as part of a healthy balanced diet, such as:
 - Egg yolks
 - Fortified foods – such as most margarines, soy yogurts, soy milk, almond milk, some orange juices and some breakfast cereals
 - Liver
 - Mushrooms
 - Oily fish – such as salmon, sardines, herring, mackerel and tuna
 - Red meat
 - Ricotta Cheese

Further information on vitamin D from the NHS is also available on-line from the following link:

NHS Choices Vitamin D <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/vitamins-minerals/Pages/Vitamin-D.aspx>

