

VITAMIN D - THE SUNSHINE VITAMIN

Do we need it all year round?

The most effective way of getting enough vitamin D3 is through skin exposure to the UVB rays from the sun. But this method of receiving Vitamin D3 is dependent on certain factors:

1. Where in the world we are living. If you live in the Northern hemisphere then Vitamin D3 from sun exposure in the period from October to April is not possible due to the positioning of the sun at this time of the year. It sits too low in the sky and therefore the frequency of the UVB rays are not there for us to get it and convert it to Vitamin D3.
2. Our summers are variable and usually not with prolonged sunshine.
3. If there is cloud cover the UVB rays will not penetrate it.
4. If you live in an area with heavy pollution the UVB rays will not get through.
5. Sun screen or sun block - UVB will not pass through the barrier.
6. You need to expose a 1/3 of your body to the sun between 10am and 2pm for at least 10/15 minutes depending on your skin pigment. The lighter your skin the quicker the UVB rays are absorbed into the skin so you will need less time in the sun without sunscreen but you still need to be careful that you do not burn.
7. You will not receive any Vitamin D3 sitting in the shade.
8. You will not absorb UVB rays through glass, so although you may feel the heat of the sun sitting in your car or in a conservatory you will not be getting any Vitamin D3.
9. New research suggests that in Pregnancy you need higher levels of Vitamin D3. This way the growing child is receiving adequate amounts and there is still enough for the mother.
10. Most at risk are, people who spend a lot of time indoors, the elderly, pregnant women and those who cover up for cultural reasons.

So what should you do if you live in an area where Vitamin D3 from sunshine is more difficult to come by? All new research is suggesting that we should be supplementing all year round. The government RDA is 200 iu and we now know that this is completely inadequate. For instance if you were receiving Vitamin D3 for a few minutes in direct sun you would be surpassing 20,00 iu which is 100 times greater than the RDA. The UVB rays will degrade any excesses received from the sun at around 20,000 iu.

We do not need that amount every day but the most recent studies are all suggesting that it needs to be much higher than previously thought.

It is a good idea that you get your levels checked by your doctor. If you are below 40nmol/ltr you are living hand to mouth and not storing any vitamin D3 so to change this we must take 75 iu per kilo per person per day. This amount is the same of babies, children and adults.

Always consult with your GP if you are on any medications before taking any supplements.

I hope that you have found this useful. If you would like to speak to me further or would like a full Nutritional Consultation contact me on 0742 924 7672