



VITAMIN D & SUN SAFETY

VITAMIN D PLAYS A VERY IMPORTANT ROLE IN HELPING OUR BODY ABSORB CALCIUM. WITHOUT ENOUGH OF IT, WE ARE AT AN INCREASED RISK OF DEVELOPING OSTEOPOROSIS

In the summer months, Vitamin D (a.k.a., “the sunshine vitamin”), becomes the topic of many conversations. This is because our bodies can use sunlight to manufacture Vitamin D! When skin is exposed to sunlight, it makes vitamin D from cholesterol. The sun’s ultraviolet B (UVB) rays hit cholesterol in the skin cells, providing the energy for vitamin D synthesis to occur.

However, with the risk of skin cancer from too much sun exposure, many people worry about how to safely get enough sunlight. In fact, it is estimated that more than 40% of American adults have a vitamin D deficiency.

To increase your level of Vitamin D, you can find it in the following foods: cod liver oil, swordfish, salmon, canned tuna, beef liver, egg yolks and sardines.

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When you are outside, you can practice the following sun safety tips to help your body stay safe while optimizing its level of Vitamin D:

1. Wear sunscreen every day, in all weather and in every season. It should have a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30 and say “broad-spectrum” on the label, which means it protects against the sun’s harmful effects of UVA and UVB rays. Put it on at least 15 minutes before going outside.
2. Reapply sunscreen at least every 80 minutes, or more often if you’re sweating or swimming.
3. Wear sunglasses with total UV protection.
4. Wear wide-brimmed hats.
5. Check your skin regularly so you can be aware of any skin changes or new growths.
6. Choose cosmetics and contact lenses that offer UV protection.
7. If you’re a parent, protect your child’s skin and practice those habits together.
8. Don’t use tanning beds.

