



Live Well, Work Well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by the insurance specialists at National Insurance Services, Inc.

The body makes vitamin D when skin is directly exposed to the sun, and most people can meet some of their vitamin D needs this way. Skin exposed to sunshine through a window will not produce vitamin D.

GETTING ENOUGH VITAMIN D?

Vitamin D is essential for maintaining strong bones and preventing a host of other health problems, but an alarming number of people do not get enough of this important vitamin. Yet, getting the proper amount can be as easy as spending a little time in the sun or taking a daily multivitamin.

Where is it Found?

It is commonly called the “sunshine vitamin” because the body produces vitamin D only when exposed to direct sunlight. However, it is also found in certain foods, including fish, eggs and milk.

Vitamin D Requirements

Experts recommend that people, especially children, be exposed to 5–30 minutes of direct sunlight (no sunscreen) between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. at least twice a week. Certain foods do provide vitamin D as well, but it is next to impossible to get enough from diet alone. Another option is vitamin D supplements or one of the many multivitamins that contain it.

Importance of Vitamin D

Vitamin D helps bones properly absorb calcium, which keeps them strong. In addition, studies indicate that vitamin D could play a role in the prevention and treatment of type 1 and 2 diabetes, hypertension, glucose intolerance and multiple sclerosis.

Traditionally, vitamin D deficiency has been associated with rickets in children, a rare disease that leads to soft bones and skeletal deformities. In adults, osteomalacia is a classic disease linked to vitamin D deficiency, which results in muscular weakness in addition to weak bones.

Beyond these diseases, more recent research has found that vitamin D deficiency can lead to high blood pressure, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and various cancers. In children, low vitamin D levels can lead to development of

these diseases at a much earlier age.

How is it Measured?

Because vitamin D can come from sun, food and supplements, the best measure to determine your Vitamin D level is through a routine blood test.