

# Vitamin D Supplementation and Your Breastfeeding Baby

## Why does my baby need vitamin D?

Babies need vitamin D for healthy growth and development. It helps build strong bones and teeth. Without sufficient vitamin D babies and toddlers are at risk for rickets, a disease that affects the way bones grow and develop which can lead to skeletal deformities and fractures. Your baby will receive enough vitamin D by giving a daily supplement.

## Does my breastfed baby need vitamin D?

YES, all infants – regardless of whether they are breastfed, or formula fed\*\* – need vitamin D. Infants need to receive a daily supplement of 400IU of vitamin D from birth until they get enough from their diets later in life.

## How do babies get vitamin D?



Vitamin D comes from a variety of sources. It is formed naturally in the body when skin is exposed to sunlight. Because of our awareness of dangers of too much sun (skin cancer, eye damage, immune system suppression), we are using sunscreen, sun-protective clothing, and limiting our direct sun exposure. This protects children from the harmful effects of the sun, but this doesn't allow sufficient vitamin D to be formed even in our sunny state of Arizona.

Vitamin D is also found in food. Breast milk is the best food to give to your baby but there may not be enough vitamin D in your breastmilk. Mothers who are low in vitamin D will produce milk low in vitamin D. Even mothers who eat a diet rich in vitamin D may not provide enough vitamin D in their breast milk to meet their baby's need.



Vitamin D is found in vitamin supplements. Babies should receive a supplement specifically designed for infants. It comes in liquid form and is typically given with a dropper. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends all infants receive 400IU (international units) of vitamin D per day. If you already give your baby a daily vitamin supplement, check with your pharmacist or health care provider to make sure it has the correct amount of vitamin D.

## How do I give vitamin D supplement to my baby?

Follow the guidelines printed on the label of the vitamin D supplement. How it should be administered varies depending on the product and the age of the infant. Some supplements allow you to mix with food or drink, some you administer alone. If your baby spits up the supplement or vomits after the administering the supplement, do NOT re-administer the supplement. Consult your health care provider if your baby routinely spits up or vomits after the supplement.

If you have additional questions, please ask your WIC counselor or your baby's health care provider for more information. Additional information can be found online at [www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org)

\*\*American Academy of Pediatrics states babies who intake more than 32 ounces of formula a day do not need vitamin D supplement



24-Hour Breastfeeding Hotline  
1-800-833-4642

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