

## Vitamin D and Osteoporosis

Vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin, which means we can store it in our body for long periods of time. Vitamin D is important for healthy bones and may have other benefits, such as helping our body absorb calcium in our diet and keeping our immune system healthy. Vitamin D is made in the skin when we are in the sun. Canadians do not have as much sun exposure in the winter months, and a supplement is recommended. Vitamin D supplements can be taken all year and do not usually need to be adjusted for the summer months.

### How Much Vitamin D Should You Take?

The Osteoporosis Society of Canada recommends people get the following amounts of Vitamin D per day as a supplement:

	Amount of Vitamin D
Age <50, no osteoporosis or problems with absorption	400-1000 IU per day
Age >50	800-1000 IU per day
Osteoporosis	800-2000 IU per day

Source: Osteoporosis Society of Canada [www.osteoporosis.ca](http://www.osteoporosis.ca)

### High Vitamin D Foods to Include in Your Diet

Vitamin D is found naturally in foods such as fatty fish (i.e., salmon) and egg yolks. Some foods are also fortified with vitamin D (i.e., cow's milk, margarine, some orange juices, cereal). These food sources are not enough to meet our daily vitamin D needs and you should take a vitamin D supplement to meet the recommended daily intake.

Food	Serving Size	Vitamin D Content (IU)
Salmon (canned or cooked)	2.5 oz*	338-447 IU
Mackerel, canned	2.5 oz*	219 IU
Sardines, canned	2.5 oz*	144 IU
Milk (Whole, 1%, 2%, Skim, Chocolate)	1 Cup (250ml)	103-105 IU
Fortified Soy, Rice, Oat, or Almond Beverage	1 Cup (250ml)	85-90 IU
Egg Yolk (cooked)	2 large	57-88 IU
Fortified Orange Juice	½ Cup (125ml)	50 IU

\* 2.5 oz is the same size as the palm of your hand or a deck of cards (Source: Canadian Nutrient File: <https://food-nutrition.canada.ca/cnf-fce/nutrientSearch-rechercheAliment.do>)

### Vitamin D Supplements

- Taking too much Vitamin D can lead to high calcium levels and other harmful concerns, but this is rare. Talk to your doctor if you are taking more than 2000 IU per day.
- People with bowel conditions or previous stomach surgery may absorb less Vitamin D and may need to take more or have an injection of Vitamin D.
- People with osteoporosis do not have enough Vitamin D and supplements should be started at least 3-4 months before measuring Vitamin D levels. If the level is normal, it does not need to be rechecked unless another issue arises.