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Dermatology & Dermatologic Surgery  
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## Vitamin D

Many Americans have an insufficient level of vitamin D. This increases the risk of osteoporosis and possibly several types of cancer. Exposing your skin to sunlight is one way to get vitamin D, but the trade off is an increased risk of skin cancer. In addition, sun exposure leads to photoaging of the skin and wrinkles. An alternative solution is to protect your skin from the sun, and compensate by taking an amount of vitamin D3 that would simulate ample sun exposure.

### FOR GOOD HEALTH:

- Be sun-safe
- Take 1,000 IU of Vitamin D3 per day including what you are taking in your other daily vitamins.
- Monitor your blood levels of Vitamin D periodically to be sure your supplements are working.
- Check your levels in the winter when levels tend to be at their lowest.

### NOT ALL FORMS OF VITAMIN D ARE CREATED EQUAL

When deciding which Vitamin D supplement to buy, check the list of ingredients to be sure it contains **cholecalciferol**, the most effective type of Vitamin D. Cholecalciferol (Vitamin D3) is the form our skin produces naturally when exposed to sunlight.

**Vitamin D3 is sold over the counter as 400 IU or 1,000 IU pills. Take it with food.**

**NOTE:** Vitamin D3 is fat soluble and can accumulate in fatty tissue causing toxic levels in the body.

**Do not take more than 2,000 IU per day** unless prescribed by your doctor. Ask your doctor whether you have a medical condition, or are taking a drug such as Fosamax that might alter your needs.

### Diet alone does not supply sufficient vitamin D for the average American †

FOOD	IU
Salmon (wild, fresh) – 4 oz.	1,000
Salmon (farmed) – 4 oz.	250
Salmon (canned) – 4 oz.	500
Tuna (canned in oil) – 3 oz.	200
Sardines (canned) – 1 ¾ oz.	250
Milk – 8 oz.	100
Fortified breakfast cereal	100
Fortified orange juice – 8 oz.	100
Fortified margarine – 1 Tbsp.	60
Egg yolk – 1	20
Liver (beef) – 4 oz.	20
Cheese (Swiss) – 1 oz.	12

### A HEALTHY STRATEGY:

- Keep the sun off your skin
- Take 1,000 I.U. of vitamin D per day

### THE PROBLEM WITH SUN

You may have heard that 10 to 15 minutes of sun is all you need to make plenty of vitamin D. However, the amount of vitamin D that your skin will produce can vary tremendously depending on your age, skin color, the area of skin exposed, sunscreen use, time of day, season, latitude, and weather conditions.

Purposely exposing your skin to the sun will yield variable results and puts you at risk of unintended overexposure. Instead, when you take a vitamin D supplement you know exactly how much you're getting. To reduce your risk of skin cancer and premature aging, carefully protect your skin from the sun. You can still maintain an adequate level of vitamin D in your system thanks to readily available over-the-counter supplements.

† International Unit (IU) values are approximate