Ass you can see, certain animal products contain more vitamin D than other foods.

It's important to check nutrition labels to be certain how much vitamin D (and other nutrients) your food actually has. Fortified foods don't all contain the same amounts of vitamin D.

How Much Do You Need?

In a healthy person, the amount of vitamin D you need every day is going to depend on your age. Your needs will increase over time as your body ages and becomes less capable of making and utilizing the vitamin.

The following will give you general guidelines for recommended daily amounts (RDA) of vitamin D for each age range.

Remember, however, that your doctor may recommend higher levels if you have vitamin D deficiency or are at risk, especially if you have osteoporosis or other bone disorders. It's important to talk with your doctor about your individual needs.

- Infants 0-6 months need 400 IU daily (no more than 1,000 IU a day)

- Infants 6-12 months need 400 IU daily (no more than 1,500 IU a day)
- Children 1-3 years old need 600 IU daily (no more than 2,500 IU a day)
- Children 4-8 years old need 600 IU daily (no more than 3,000 IU a day)
- Over 9 years old need 600 IU daily (no more than 4,000 IU a day)
- Over 70 years old need 800 IU daily (no more than 4,000 IU a day)
- Pregnant/Lactating women (14-50) need 600 IU daily (no more than 4,000 IU a day)

Notice the upper limits on these vitamin D amounts. Since vitamin D is fat-soluble, it can build up to toxic levels in your body.

This can cause some pretty serious side effects, so don't go over the daily recommended amount without your doctor's suggestion.

Diagnosis and Treatment

To start, your doctor will perform a **blood level test** to determine whether you are suffering from vitamin D deficiency.

This is a simple test that involves drawing blood from a vein in your arm. You don't need to fast or prepare for this test, either.

The most common one is 25-hydroxyvitamin D or 25(OH)D.

This isn't a test that is routinely ordered for a physical, so you need to discuss with your doctor whether you are at risk and need a vitamin D level test.

A blood level of 20 nanograms per milliliter (ng/ml) up to 50 ng/ml is considered to be an adequate level for most healthy people.

If your blood level is less than 12 to 20 ng/ml, you definitely have a vitamin D deficiency. Your doctor will then recommend a daily intake of vitamin D-rich food or a supplement as discussed in a previous chapter of this report.

A doctor can also prescribe vitamin D levels over the daily recommended amounts if you need them to get your blood levels back to normal.

While you might consider eating more vitamin D-rich foods like fish or beef liver or fortified milk products, most likely your doctor will recommend a supplement for you.

There are two types of vitamin D: **D2 and D3.**

The D3 type, also known as ergocalciferol, is found in some plants. D2, or cholecalciferol, is the type that comes from animals.

You'll need a prescription for D2, but D3 is available over the counter at any pharmacy. Prescription vitamin D usually comes in 50,000 IU and is designed to take once or twice a week.

D3 is more easily absorbed than D2 and can last longer in your body than D3. Just make sure you follow your doctor's recommendations and avoid getting too much vitamin D.

Also, keep in mind that while you can't get too much Vitamin D from sunlight, if you overdo your supplements, you can get more than the daily recommended amount and cause some negative side effects like hypercalcemia (too much calcium in your blood), nausea, increased thirst and urination, constipation, and poor appetite.

In extreme cases, you might cause weakness and confusion, or even ataxia (a neurological condition that makes you slur your words and suffer from clumsiness).

If your doctor recommends more than the usual RDA, be on the lookout for these symptoms and let them know immediately if you have any of them.

Another thing to beware of is the amount of vitamin A you're getting along with that vitamin D. Vitamin A can also build up in your body and cause toxic side effects

Final Words

Most people in the United States consume less than the daily recommended amount of vitamin D.

Data from a 2013 to 2016 study (from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey), showed that 92% of men, more than 97% of women, and **94% of all people** over the age of one year were getting less than the daily recommended amount of 400 IU of vitamin D from food or beverages!

A further analysis of their data from 2015 to 2016 showed that the average daily amounts of vitamin D from food and beverages was only 204 IU in men and 168 IU in women. Children aged 2 to 19 were only getting 196 IU daily.

This data (2015 to 2016) also showed that 28% of individuals aged 2 years old and older in the United States were taking a vitamin D

supplement. 26% of those study participants aged 2 to 5 years were taking supplements, and 14% of children 6 to 11 years old took a supplement.

These rates increased with age. 10% of those aged 12 to 19 took vitamin D supplements. 49% of men and 59% of women over 60 years were taking a supplement.

And finally, studies revealed that levels of vitamin D increased dramatically **(more than three times higher)** when people followed a healthy diet.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans describes a healthy diet as one in which:

- A variety of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, fat-free or low-fat milk or milk products, and oils are eaten.

- Milk, some ready-to-eat cereals, some margarines and yogurts, and some orange juice may be fortified with vitamin D. Cheese naturally has small amounts of this vitamin already in it.

- A variety of protein foods are eaten, including seafood, lean meats and poultry, eggs, legumes (beans and peas), nuts, seeds, and soy products.

- Fatty fish such as salmon, tuna, and mackerel, are very good sources of vitamin D. Beef liver and egg yolks have small amounts of vitamin D in them.

- Saturated and trans-fats are limited.

- Added sugars and sodium are limited.

So, if you're wondering whether you have a vitamin D deficiency, the first (and best) thing to do is make sure your diet includes

plenty of sources of vitamin D. In addition, get more sunshine as well!

And if you are concerned, make sure you check with your doctor to get tested. If your doctor suggests a supplement, you can easily find the right amount over the counter, or you may have a prescription for a once-to twice-weekly supplement.

In other words, it's relatively easy to resolve a Vitamin D deficiency if you make an effort to focus on your health.

Resources

Here are links to a few resources that I believe will help you:

How to Increase Vitamin D Levels:

>> https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/how-to-increase-vitamin-d

Vitamin D Fact Sheet:

>> https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/VitaminD-HealthProfessional

Vitamin D Deficiency:

>> https://medlineplus.gov/vitaminddeficiency.html

Vitamin D Deficiency Treatment:

>> https://www.webmd.com/diet/guide/vitamin-d-deficiency#1