



Vitamin D Supplementation

Why it matters

Vitamin D supports healthy bone development and calcium absorption. Without adequate vitamin D, children can be at risk for rickets (soft or weak bones) and other bone-health issues.

Who needs supplementation & how much?

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics:

- All **exclusively or partially breast-fed infants** should receive **400 IU (international units)** of vitamin D daily, starting soon after birth.
 - Infants who are **formula-fed but ingest less than about 1 liter (≈32 ounces) of vitamin D-fortified formula per day** should also receive 400 IU daily.
 - Once a formula-fed infant is consistently getting at least ~1 liter (32 oz) of vitamin D-fortified formula per day, additional supplementation may not be needed.
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Other key points

- **Breast milk alone** does not reliably provide enough vitamin D (even if the parent is taking supplements) for the infant's full requirement. That is why direct supplementation is recommended.
- Exclusively breastfed infants are at increased risk of vitamin D deficiency and rickets. This is because human milk typically contains only small amounts of vitamin D, insufficient to prevent rickets
- Routine screening of vitamin D levels in healthy children is *not* recommended unless there are risk factors (such as malabsorption, chronic disease, dark skin + minimal sun exposure) because no evidence supports universal screening in healthy kids.
- Sunlight is a source of vitamin D production in the skin — but factors like sunscreen use, limited outdoor time, high latitude/indoor life, and darker skin reduce how much vitamin D the body makes. The AAP emphasizes supplementation rather than relying on sunlight for infants.

Quick Reference Table

Age/Feeding Situation	Recommendation
Breastfed /Partially Breast fed infants	400 IU/day of vitamin D supplement
Formula-fed infants who consume less than ~1 liter (≈32 oz) of vitamin D-fortified formula per day	400 IU/day of vitamin D supplement
Formula-fed infants who consume ~1 liter (≈32 oz) or more of vitamin D-fortified formula per day	Usually no additional supplement needed (check with pediatrician)
Children/adolescents who do not get 400 IU/day from fortified milk or foods	Consider supplement 400 IU/day