



Did you know that all children under five should take a vitamin D supplement every day?

Vitamin D is sometimes called the sunshine vitamin as we make it in our skins when outside in the sunshine. In the UK the sun is only strong enough to do this between April and September. During the winter months we do not make any at all. Only the following foods contain it:

- Oily fish – salmon, mackerel, sardines, pilchards are all good sources and one serve a week is recommended
- Meat and eggs – provide very small amounts
- Foods fortified with vitamin D – formula milks for babies, evaporated milk, some brands of yogurt and breakfast cereals

Other countries fortify more foods.

Because so few foods contain it, the **UK Department of Health recommends the following groups take a supplement every day all year round:**

- **Babies and children under five years of age**
- **Pregnant and breastfeeding women**
- **Those over 64 years**
- **Those with a dark skin as they need more time in the sun to make vitamin D**
- **Anyone who spends very little time outside**
- **Those who always wear concealing clothing and only have their face and hands exposed when they are outside**

National diet and nutrition surveys show that 40% of the UK population have very low levels of vitamin D during winter and even in summer about 10% of people are deficient. Low levels affect growth and development, bone density and the immune system.

The UK Government is currently considering recommending everyone in the UK should take a supplement of 10 micrograms of vitamin D every day.

Vitamin D supplements

The **Healthy Start vitamins** contain vitamin D. You are entitled to free Healthy Start vitamin drops for your children if you receive Healthy Start vouchers. Pregnant and breastfeeding mothers registered with the scheme are also entitled to free Health Start vitamins for women.

Giant Leap Baby Clinic is run by our local NHS Community Nurse, you can make an appointment every Friday.

If you have to buy your own vitamin D supplements only buy brands sold in pharmacies as these have good quality control. Good brands to buy are Boots, Colief, Ddrops, HealthAid, Healthy Start, Vitabiotics.

At Giant Leap we love the great outdoors we get the children outside every day, for fun outdoor play on our baby balcony, play areas, gardens & forest school.

We also provide nutritious food prepared fresh daily, however it may also make sense to take a vitamin D supplement as Department of Health guidance recommends, given how much sunshine we get in the UK during the winter months.

