

Vitamin D Supplementation: An Update

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Abstract

An estimated 1 billion people worldwide, across all ethnicities and age groups, have a vitamin D deficiency.[1–3] This is mostly attributable to people getting less sun exposure because of climate, lifestyle, and concerns about skin cancer. The 1997 Dietary Reference Intake (DRI) values for vitamin D, initially established to prevent rickets and osteomalacia, are considered too low by many experts.[4] DRI values are 200 IU for infants, children, adults up to age 50 years, and pregnant and lactating women; 400 IU for adults aged 50 to 70 years; and 600 IU for adults older than 70 years. Current studies suggest that we may need more vitamin D than presently recommended to prevent chronic disease. Emerging research supports the possible role of vitamin D in protecting against cancer, heart disease, fractures and falls, autoimmune diseases, influenza, type 2 diabetes, and depression. Many health care providers have increased their recommendations for vitamin D supplementation to at least 1,000 IU.[5] As a result, more patients are asking their pharmacists about supplementing with vitamin D.

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