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**Do you want your kids to grow up to be healthy adults? Do you want the best for your children?**

I certainly do, so I give my children a daily vitamin D supplement.

Vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin that a person needs to support bone health, immune health, muscle function, and brain health. ¹ Vitamin D also helps the body absorb calcium needed for strong bones. ¹

Research has shown that Vitamin D can help prevent cancer and help with cognitive health, inherited bone disorders, multiple sclerosis, osteoporosis, psoriasis, and rickets. ¹ In other research, it has become increasingly evident that vitamin D plays a significant role in brain health. ² Research has shown that a deficiency in vitamin D can lead to disorders such as schizophrenia and autism. ³

Food manufacturers even fortify foods with vitamin D because vitamin D is not found naturally in many foods. Foods that have been fortified include mill, cereal, and fish such as salmon, mackerel, and sardines. ¹ Another way to get vitamin D is through direct sunlight. The body will make vitamin D3 when exposed to direct sunlight. ⁴

During childhood, the body is rapidly changing and growing. It is when there is great bone development, and a child needs an adequate and balanced diet to provide them with the nutrients essential to make that happen. Unfortunately, today with fast food and UberEATS, a proper and balanced diet is not typical. According to a study done by a team at Tufts University and published in *JAMA* (Journal of the American Medical Association), children’s diets have improved slightly but remain poor for most. ⁵

Several groups do not typically have enough access to sunlight to make adequate vitamin D levels, including disabled people, infants, older people, people with dark skin, and those living in the northern latitudes. ⁴ For some of these groups, it is simply because they are less likely to be outdoors. Older adults do not produce vitamin D3 as effectively. ⁴ People with dark skin have more melanin, so less UV light gets absorbed, and for people that live in the north during the wintertime, the sun is not out that much, and we are covering up most of our body. ⁴ Another factor that can minimize getting vitamin D3 through the sunlight is sunscreen. Although sunscreen is a great way to protect the skin from skin cancer, it can also decrease the amount of vitamin D a person gets. ¹

Several groups of children are at high risk for vitamin D deficiency. One of those groups is overweight children. This is due to the fat cells absorbing and not releasing vitamin D. ⁶ Children with autoimmune conditions such as type 1 diabetes, celiac disease, and cystic fibrosis are too at an increased risk of vitamin D deficiency. ⁶ With this group of children, their bodies are not working optimally and are not absorbing specific vitamins like people who do not have these conditions. Interestingly, another group of children that present with a vitamin D deficiency is children with asthma. ⁶

Vitamin D deficiency symptoms in children include muscle weakness, muscle cramps, bone pain, tiredness, and depression. ⁷ A vitamin D level of less than 21 in children means they are deficient. ⁷ A simple blood test by your pediatrician can let you know your child’s vitamin D level.

Vitamin D deficiency is a global issue and affects approximately one billion people worldwide. ⁸ We need to protect our children now so they may become healthy adults. We can accomplish this task by giving our children a daily vitamin D supplement. Kids older than 1-year need 600IU or more of vitamin D daily. ⁹ If your child has a specific medical condition such as obesity, type 1 diabetes, celiac disease, cystic fibrosis, or is healing from bone surgery, they might require a higher vitamin D. ⁹ Talk to your pediatrician to determine the correct dosage for your child.

Today, we must give our children a vitamin D supplement to ensure their health. The research shows that deficiency is increasing in children, and deficient children will lead to deficient adults with more medical issues and more financial burden on our healthcare system. It is best to always discuss with your pediatrician before giving a vitamin D supplement to determine dosage and frequency.

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