



VITAMIN D SUPPLEMENTS ARE NO LONGER RECOMMENDED ON PRESCRIPTION IN DERBYSHIRE AND THEREFORE WILL NEED TO BE PURCHASED

(cheapest options available for less than £1 per month)

The Derbyshire Joint Area Prescribing Committee (JAPC) has recently reviewed its advice on vitamin D and now recommend that clinicians provide high dose (20,000 units) short treatment courses on NHS prescriptions but long term low dose (800 units) supplements for maintenance following treatment of deficiency or insufficiency (excluding patients with osteoporosis, osteopenia or primary hyperparathyroidism) have been classified as **BLACK** and will no longer be routinely provided on NHS prescriptions in Derbyshire.

JAPC recommends that the patient is encouraged to make lifestyle changes and to purchase a supplement over the counter from a local pharmacy, health food shop or supermarket, in line with the Department of Health advice.

Nearly all the vitamin D we obtain (90%) is made in the body via sunlight with a very small amount being obtained from our diet. The Department of Health recommends **everyone** (including pregnant and breastfeeding women) should consider buying and taking a daily supplement of vitamin D.

Adult patients who have received treatment for vitamin D deficiency or insufficiency are being advised that supplements containing 1000 units (25 micrograms) are considerably cheaper to purchase than those containing 400 units (10 micrograms) or 800 units (20 micrograms) and are suitable for their situation. These typically cost less than £1 to buy for a month's supply e.g. Valupak vitamin D 1000 units x 60 = £0.99

Patients currently prescribed generic colecalciferol 800 units tablets or capsules, Fultium D3 800 unit capsules or Desunin 800 unit tablets following treatment of deficiency or insufficiency will have their repeat prescription stopped and will be sent a letter to inform them of this change. Included with the letter is information on how to maintain vitamin D levels (see overleaf).

For further information please go to the Derbyshire Medicines Management Website:

<http://www.derbyshiremedicinesmanagement.nhs.uk>

Clinical guidelines / BNF 9 Nutrition & blood /vitamin D - position statement for self-care

Clinical guidelines / BNF 9 Nutrition & blood /vitamin D – management of deficiency



How to maintain your vitamin D levels - Information for adults following treatment of vitamin D deficiency or low vitamin D levels.

- **Take a regular vitamin D supplement.** These are available to buy from pharmacies, health food shops or supermarkets. Supplements containing 1000 units (25 micrograms) are considerably cheaper to purchase than those containing 400 units (10 micrograms) or 800 units (20 micrograms) and are suitable for your situation. These typically cost less than £1 to buy for a month's supply. Please note some women may be able to get vitamin supplements containing vitamin D free of charge if they are pregnant or breastfeeding via the Healthy Start scheme –your health visitor or local pharmacy can provide more information.
- **Get regular exposure to sunlight.** It is important that sun exposure is as safe as possible. Most people can make enough vitamin D from being out in the sun daily for short periods with their forearms, hands or lower legs uncovered and without sunscreen from late March or early April to the end of September, especially from 11am to 3pm. It's not known exactly how much time is needed in the sun to make enough vitamin D to meet the body's requirements. This is because there are a number of factors that can affect how vitamin D is made, such as your skin colour or how much skin you have exposed. But you should be careful not to burn in the sun, so take care to cover up, or protect your skin with sunscreen, before your skin starts to turn red or burn. People with dark skin, such as those of African, African-Caribbean or south Asian origin, will need to spend longer in the sun to produce the same amount of vitamin D as someone with lighter skin.
- **Eat foods that contain higher amounts of vitamin D** as part of a healthy balanced diet, such as:
 - oily fish – such as salmon, sardines, herring, mackerel and tuna.
 - red meat.
 - liver.
 - egg yolks.
 - fortified foods – such as most margarines and some breakfast cereals.

Further information on vitamin D from the NHS is also available on-line from the following link:

NHS Choices Vitamin D <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/vitamins-minerals/Pages/Vitamin-D.aspx>

