

Vitamin supplements for babies born after 34 weeks gestation Information for parents and carers

Why is it important for my baby to take a vitamin supplement?

Vitamin D is essential for healthy bone growth and skin development. Most vitamins are normally obtained from breast or formula milk. Vitamin D is also known as the “sunshine vitamin”, it is mostly obtained by sunlight on the skin and it’s only found in very small amounts in breast milk. Practising sun safety is important as babies burn easily in sunlight.

As your baby gets older, Vitamins A and C are also important they support a healthy immune system, and it is difficult to get enough from food alone.

Vitamin D - Who should take it?

You...

The department of health recommends all breast feeding mothers consumes 10ug vitamin D per day.

Your breast fed baby...

If your baby is solely breast fed they need 8.5ug-10ug vitamin D, regardless of whether you are also taking vitamin D. Once your baby is over 1 year old they need 10ug vitamin D per day.

Your formula fed baby...

Formula milk already has vitamin D added. Formula fed babies, do not need vitamin D until they consume less than 500mls of formula per day.

What about other vitamins?

Once your baby is 6 months old or consumes less than 500ml of formula milk per day they need vitamin supplements containing vitamins A, C and D every day until 5 years of age.

Where can I get vitamins?

You may be able to get free vitamin supplements without a prescription if you're eligible for Healthy Start. Your Health Visitor will be able to give you more details on Healthy Start vouchers and vitamins.

If you are not entitled to health start vouchers, vitamin drops are widely available in your local supermarket or pharmacy. Make sure they are suitable for your baby's age.

How much should I give?

Always follow the instructions on the label, the label will guide you on how many drops for your baby's age.

When should I stop?

It is recommended that all children take 10ug of vitamin D, unless consuming 500mls of formula or more per day.

How should I give it?

You will be supplied with syringe when purchasing the vitamins. You will need to measure out the correct amount.

Try to give medicines at about the same times each day, to help you remember.

What if my baby is sick (vomits)?

Wait until the next dose and give the normal dose. DO NOT give double the dose.

What if I forget to give it?

Wait until the next dose and give the normal dose. DO NOT give double the dose.

What if I accidentally give too much?

Never give your child more than the packet has advised. If you think you may have given too much, contact your GP or NHS 111.

Are there any possible side effects?

Vitamins are a normal part of the diet so you should not notice any side effects.

Can other medicines be given at the same time as vitamins?

Check with your doctor or pharmacist before giving any other medicines to your baby. This includes herbal and complimentary medicines.

Where should I keep vitamins?

Keep the vitamins in a cupboard away from heat and direct sunlight.

Make sure children cannot see or reach the vitamins.

Make sure that the vitamins you have at home have not reached the 'best before' or 'use by' date on the packaging. Keep all medicines in the container it came in.

Who to contact for more information

Your doctor, pharmacist, dietitian or health visitor will be able to give you more information about vitamin drops.

Health Visitors can be contacted on 0300 300 0123

NHS England - www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/vitamins-for-children/

