

Vitamin D Deficiency

What is vitamin D? Vitamin D is an essential vitamin that is important in regulation of blood calcium levels and bone development. Vitamin D is found in dairy products and some fish, but most of it is synthesized in your skin during times of sun exposure. Vitamin D deficiency is relatively common in the United States, even here in Houston, where we get plenty of sun.

What happens when vitamin D is low? Severe vitamin D deficiency in childhood can cause rickets, an abnormal development of the bones. In adults, it contributes to osteoporosis and bone fractures. There has also been increasing evidence over the past few years that vitamin D deficiency may contribute to fatigue and muscle pains.

How much vitamin D should I take? Normal maintenance dose for the average adult is typically around 400-800 International Units per day, but higher doses may be required in individuals who already have vitamin D deficiency or osteoporosis; discuss the right dose with your doctor.