

Does your Breastfed  
Baby Need

# Vitamin D Supplements



State of Alaska  
Department of Health & Social Services  
Division of Public Assistance  
Family Nutrition Programs  
Women, Infant and Children (WIC)



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# Vitamin D Supplements for your Breastfed Baby

Q&A

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Questions & Answers about Vitamin D  
and your breastfed baby

# Does your breastfed baby need Vitamin D supplements?

## **Q Doesn't breastmilk have everything my baby needs?**

**A** Breastmilk is the best food for your baby. However, vitamin D is needed for your baby's growing bones.

Vitamin D is often called the "Sunshine Vitamin" because it is made by sunshine on bare skin. Vitamin D is added to formula and to cow's milk.

Your breastfed baby needs Vitamin D to go with your breastmilk, just as vitamin D is added to other kinds of milk.

We recommend that you start giving your breastfed and partially breastfed baby vitamin D in the first few days of life unless the infant is weaned to 1 qt. of formula per day. Babies who do not get enough vitamin D can develop a serious disease called rickets, which is harmful to bones and growth.



## **Q How much Vitamin D should I give?**

**A** Most infants need 400 IUs per day. Supplemental vitamins should be administered according to instructions on the package and as recommended by your healthcare provider.

## **Q What if I miss a dose, or my baby spits up a dose?**

**A** Do not give double doses for missed doses. Do not give extra vitamin drops if your baby spits up a dose.

## **Can't the breastfeeding mother take the vitamins instead of giving them to the baby?**

It is better if vitamin D is given to your baby. Research shows that not enough vitamin D reaches the baby in breastmilk if only the breastfeeding mother takes the vitamin. Your healthcare provider may recommend that a breastfeeding mother take vitamin supplements while she is breastfeeding, but the baby still needs to take a vitamin D supplement.

## **Q Should I give the vitamin drops if my baby gets formula or cow's milk?**

**A** Vitamin D is already added to formula and cow's milk. But all breastfed babies still need extra vitamin D, until they are getting at least 1 qt. of formula or cow's milk in addition to breastmilk.

## **Q What foods contain Vitamin D?**

**A** Vitamin D is found naturally in some foods such as fatty fish, egg yolk and fish oils. It is added to a few foods such as baby formula, milk products and some cereals and breads.

## **Q How can I get Vitamin D for my baby?**

**A** Discuss this with WIC, your health care provider, or your Native Health Corporation clinic. WIC helps distribute Vitamin A, C, and D supplements for breastfed babies. They are optional and may be declined. Supplements are not WIC benefits and cannot be purchased with WIC checks; they are paid for by other funding sources.