How much Vitamin D?

The current American Academy of Pediatrics’ Vitamin D recommendation for infants and children is listed below.

- All infants, 0-12 months of age and children need Vitamin D.
  - Formula-fed infants, who drink less than 32 ounces of formula per day, need 400 International Units (IU) Vitamin D each day. 32 ounces of formula per day is too much for most infants. Talk with your WIC nutritionist or healthcare provider about your baby’s formula needs.
  - Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for babies. Even breastfed infants need 400 IU Vitamin D each day starting at birth or within the first few days of life.
  - All children need at least 400 IU Vitamin D each day. Milk is a good source of Vitamin D. Milk provides 100 IU per 8 ounces. Young children, 1 through 5 years old, only need 2 to 2.5 cups or 16-20 ounces of milk per day. Giving 32 ounces of milk per day to meet Vitamin D needs is too much and may cause health problems. Children will still need a Vitamin D supplement.
- Most adults and teens need 400–600 IU Vitamin D each day.

To do:

- Discuss your infant’s and child’s Vitamin D needs with their healthcare provider.
- Discuss your Vitamin D needs with your healthcare provider.
- Talk to your healthcare provider about safe sun exposure for you and your children.
- Eat good sources of Vitamin D everyday.

Adapted with permission from Ammonoosuc Community Health Service’s “Vitamin D Let a Little Sunshine In” NH DHHS WIC PROGRAM, 2011
Who might need Vitamin D?

- Do you live in the northeast part of the US?
- Do you have limited sun exposure?
- Do you use sunscreen when you are outside?
- Do you have dark skin?
- Do you have an infant, young child or teen?
- You do not eat foods high in Vitamin D daily?

If you have answered yes to one or more of these questions, then you and your children most likely need a Vitamin D supplement.

What can you do?

Steps you can take to get enough Vitamin D:

- Try getting 10-15 minutes of natural sun exposure before putting on sunscreen so your body can make its own Vitamin D.
* Talk to your doctor about safe amounts of sun exposure and the use of sunscreen for you and your children.
- Talk to your healthcare provider about a Vitamin D supplement for you and your children.
- Eat fatty fish, Vitamin D-fortified milk and cereal.

Which foods have Vitamin D?

Good sources of Vitamin D are:

- Fatty fish like salmon, sardines, tuna and mackerel; lesser amounts of Vitamin D are found in beef liver and egg yolks.
- Our main dietary sources of Vitamin D come from fortified foods such as milk, ready-to-eat cereal, margarine and some orange juice. Check the label.
- Vitamin D supplements are available over-the-counter. Most people will need to take a Vitamin D supplement, especially during the winter.

Why do we need Vitamin D?

Vitamin D’s main job is to help your body absorb Calcium. Calcium is needed for:

- Development of healthy bones, muscles and teeth,
- Preventing soft and weakened bones (rickets), in children, and
- Preventing the loss of bone density (osteoporosis) in adults.

Sunlight & Vitamin D

The natural way for our body to get Vitamin D is by being out in the sun. In New Hampshire, we might get enough Vitamin D if we are outside daily, for short periods of time without sunscreen* during June through September. From October through May, the sun is not strong enough to produce Vitamin D.

- When you use sunscreen, your body does not make Vitamin D.
- Sunlight on your skin through a window is not strong enough to make Vitamin D.