

# Vitamin D

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## *Neenah Joint School District Health & Wellness Center*

Mon. 7 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
Tues. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Wed. 7 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
Thurs. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Fri. 7 a.m. to 1 p.m.

In the past few years, vitamin D has really made its way into the forefront of our minds. It started with the idea that taking vitamin D could reduce the risk of severe COVID. We'll talk more about how this idea came about.

Vitamin D is available through dietary intake and through sunlight exposure. Because it is difficult to get enough vitamin D through dietary intake alone, sunlight turns out to be the main source of vitamin D for most people. As you can imagine, people living in colder climates who don't spend as much time in the sun may have a hard time getting enough vitamin D. If adequate vitamin D can't be taken in through diet and sunlight, a supplement can help. There are many doses of vitamin D available over the counter, and there is more than one type of vitamin D. In general, vitamin D3 is the preferred form for supplementation. This is because it is most easily converted to the active form of the vitamin for use in the body.

The recommended amount of vitamin D intake per day varies by who you ask, and the correct amount of vitamin D to have on a lab draw varies as well. In general, taking 1000 or 2000 IU (international units) of vitamin D3 daily is safe and may provide a boost to circulating vitamin D levels. If you are going to take more than this amount, you should be monitored by a healthcare provider. Vitamin D over-supplementation, while uncommon, can cause an excess amount of calcium to circulate in the body. This can cause kidney stones, muscle weakness, and nausea and vomiting. As mentioned, it is not common to become toxic from vitamin D excess, but any dose above a standard over the counter amount should be monitored.

People with conditions that affect their body's ability to absorb vitamin D are at risk for deficiency. This includes those with celiac disease, Crohn disease, and cystic fibrosis. There has been some evidence that people with obesity are more likely to be deficient in vitamin D. This is where the advice to take vitamin D to avoid severe COVID came from- people admitted with severe COVID were more likely to be deficient in vitamin D, but remember that obesity is a risk factor for severe COVID so this was likely confirmation bias. There is no validated evidence that supplementing vitamin D can decrease the risk of severe COVID-19.

The bottom line is that most people living in our climate would benefit from a vitamin D supplement, but if you are considering taking more than 1000 IU to 2000 IU daily, you should seek medical advice and may need a blood test to monitor for over-supplementation.