

VITAMIN D SUPPLEMENTATION IN BREASTFEEDING

Breastfeeding is the preferred method of feeding an infant. Breastmilk is the only food or drink that healthy, full-term babies will need for the first six months. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends “that all breastfed infants be given supplemental vitamin D.” If you are concerned that your baby may be at risk for Vitamin D deficiency you should consult your doctor or health care professional.

What is Vitamin D?

- People make vitamin D when the skin is exposed to sunlight. In certain climates sun exposure is limited. Because there are no naturally occurring good food sources of Vitamin D, milk products are fortified with it to prevent rickets.

What are the symptoms of Vitamin D deficiency rickets?

- Soft bones
- Bowed legs
- Fractures
- Muscle weakness

Who is at risk for Vitamin D deficiency?

- People with darker skin
- Those who wear clothing that covers most of their skin when outdoors
- Someone with limited sun exposure
- People who live in climates with limited sun exposure
- An infant of a mother who had poor Vitamin D status during pregnancy

What can I do to decrease the risk?

- Get out and enjoy the sunshine in small increments to prevent skin damage
- Wear light clothing that allows your skin exposure to the sun
- Drink milk fortified with Vitamin D and take your prenatal vitamins while pregnant and breastfeeding
- Allow your baby to get some sunshine in small increments while using sunscreen for longer periods to avoid sunburn