

# **PATIENT INFORMATION**

## **VITAMIN D INSUFFICIENCY**

Your doctor has found the level of Vitamin D in your blood to be in the 'insufficient' range. Vitamin D insufficiency is common in the UK. Although you do not have vitamin D deficiency, your level may be inadequate for bone and overall health.

## **Vitamin D**

Vitamin D is made in the body with adequate sun exposure and is also available through diet. Vitamin D is changed to its active form by the liver and kidneys so that it can be used by the body. Vitamin D helps to control the amount of calcium and phosphate in our bodies. Both are needed for healthy bones, teeth and muscles. Adequate levels of Vitamin D and Calcium prevent Rickets in children and Osteoporosis and Osteomalacia in adults. Vitamin D has other functions too, such as helping with functions of nerve cells and immune cells.

## **Risks factors for Vitamin D deficiency**

Common risks include:

- People with darker skin, such as African, African-Caribbean and South Asian
- Elderly people in residential care, housebound or institutionalised people
- Older people aged 65 years and over
- Infants and young children under 5 years of age
- Intestinal malabsorption e.g. coeliac disease, inflammatory bowel disease, gastrectomy, cholestatic liver disease
- Routine covering of face or body e.g. habitual sunscreen use factor 15 or above

- Vegan/vegetarian diet
- Liver or kidney disease
- Medications including certain anticonvulsants, cholestyramine, rifampicin, glucocorticoids, highly active antiretrovirals
- Obesity (BMI >30)
- All pregnant and breast feeding women, especially teenagers and young women
- Short interval pregnancies
- Low vitamin D dietary intake
- If one family member is Vitamin D deficient it is likely others in the family may also be deficient, unless that person has a specific medical condition

## **Taking Vitamin D supplements for treating Vitamin D insufficiency**

For treating Vitamin D insufficiency, it is recommended to take 800 IU (or 20mcg) Colecalciferol daily.

Vitamin D can be bought over the counter or online from pharmacies, health shops and supermarkets in the form of Colecalciferol (preferred) or Ergocalciferol. Please note that some products contain doses suitable to be taken on a daily basis but others contain larger doses of colecalciferol which are intended to be taken on a weekly or monthly basis, not every day. Make sure that you have checked this before purchasing these supplements.

## **Life style and dietary advice for adult patients with low levels of Vitamin D**

Go out into the sun:

2 to 3 exposures of sunlight on bare skin per week from April to September should be enough to last through the year. Each episode should be 20 to 30 minutes to bare arms and face and should not cause sunburn.

Include foods in your diet that are rich in Vitamin D:

- Oily fish, such as salmon, mackerel, sardines, herring, mackerel and fresh tuna
- Fish oils, such as cod liver oil
- Egg yolk
- Liver
- Mushrooms and UV-irradiated yeast are the only vegan sources of vitamin D from food sources.
- Some foods are artificially fortified with vitamin D such as most fat spreads and some breakfast cereals— look out for the RDA (Recommended Daily Amount) of Vitamin D on food packaging.

If you begin to have symptoms of bone or muscle pain, or tenderness, make an appointment to see your doctor.

## Pregnancy

COMA (Committee on Medical Aspects of food) recommends:

All pregnant and lactating women should take a total of 400 iu Vitamin D (colecalciferol) per day.

\*Note: Pregnant women suspected of being vitamin D deficient should have their Vitamin D concentration measured. If Vitamin D deficiency is confirmed in

pregnancy, higher doses of Vitamin D and further monitoring may be required. Please obtain advice from your doctor.

## **More information**

You can find more information on the NHS website (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vitamins-and-minerals/vitamin-d/>). You can also ask your GP for more information.

**During your contact with us, it is important that you are happy with your care and treatment. Please speak to a member of staff and/or the ward/department Sister/Charge Nurse if you have questions or concerns.**

## **MATRON**

A Matron is also available during the hours of 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. During these periods, ward/department staff can contact Matron to arrange to meet with you. Out of hours, a Senior Nurse can be contacted via the ward/department to deal with any concerns you may have.

## **INFECTION CONTROL REQUEST**

Preventing infections is a crucial part of our patients' care. To ensure that our standards remain high our staff have regular infection prevention and control training and their practice is monitored in the workplace. We ask patients and visitors to assist us in preventing infections by cleaning their hands at regular intervals and informing staff of areas within the hospital that appear soiled.

As a patient there may be times that you are unsure whether a staff member has cleaned their hands; if in doubt please ask the staff member and they will be only too happy to put your mind at ease by cleaning their hands so that you can see them.

## **SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS**

### **ANY CONDITION SPECIFIC DANGER SIGNALS TO LOOK OUT FOR:**

### **CONTACT INFORMATION IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT YOUR CONDITION**

Your own GP

### **OTHER USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS/CONTACTS:**

NHS 111

Stop Smoking Helpline (Sefton) – 0300 100 1000

Stop Smoking Helpline (West Lancashire) – 0800 328 6297

**Please call 01704 704714 if you need  
this leaflet in an alternative format**

**Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust**

Ormskirk & District General Hospital  
Wigan Road, Ormskirk, L39 2AZ  
Tel: (01695) 577111

Southport & Formby District General Hospital  
Town Lane, Kew, Southport, PR8 6PN  
Tel: (01704) 547471

**FOR APPOINTMENTS**

Telephone (01695) 656680  
Email [soh-tr.appointments@nhs.net](mailto:soh-tr.appointments@nhs.net)

Please remember to complete the **attached Friends and Family Test**.

Alternatively, you can complete the *Friends and Family Test* on-line by going to:  
[southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/FFT](http://southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/FFT)

**Thank you**

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