

- ▶ Vitamin D supplement should be offered based on your baby's unique needs. To find out if your baby is at risk for a vitamin D deficiency, review the **risk factors** and discuss your concerns with your doctor

Can my baby get too much vitamin D?

- ▶ Yes! Vitamin D can be toxic if you give too much. If your baby is receiving vitamin D drops it is very important not to give more vitamin D than the dose recommended by your doctor or pharmacist.
- ▶ If your baby is formula fed or consuming food sources of vitamin D do not give vitamin D supplements



For further information, please call **Health Line Peel** at **905-799-7700**.



Vitamin D and the Breastfed Baby

Vitamin D is an important nutrient. The following information is to help you and your doctor decide what is best for your infant.

 **Region of Peel**
Working for you

Why is vitamin D important?

Vitamin D is important for your baby's growth and development. It works with calcium to build healthy bones and teeth.

How does my baby get vitamin D?

Babies get vitamin D from a number of sources:

- ▶ Mom's vitamin D storage during pregnancy
- ▶ Breast milk
- ▶ Sunlight
- ▶ Vitamin D supplements
- ▶ Food sources when the baby is old enough (egg yolk, margarine, cow's milk, fatty fish like salmon)



What happens if my baby doesn't get enough vitamin D?

Babies who don't get enough vitamin D are at risk of developing a vitamin D deficiency. Vitamin D deficiency can cause a disease of the bones called **rickets** and problems with tooth development.

Vitamin D deficiency is more likely to occur in breastfed babies when there is more than one of the following *risk factors*:

- ▶ Limited sunlight exposure. Low levels of vitamin D may be more common since the Canadian Cancer Society now recommends that babies under one year of age should be kept out of direct sunlight
- ▶ Mother/baby have dark skin (less vitamin D absorbed)
- ▶ Baby's and mother's skin are well-covered with clothing or sunscreen
- ▶ Living in northern areas presents a higher risk. Even though Peel Region is not considered "northern", sun rays from November through February may not be strong enough for vitamin D production
- ▶ Birth in the fall or winter. During the winter, daylight hours are shorter and it is hard to get enough sunlight to make vitamin D
- ▶ Poor intake of vitamin D during pregnancy and breastfeeding
- ▶ Vegan diet (no animal food sources) during pregnancy and breastfeeding

Should my baby be given a vitamin D supplement?

- ▶ There is conflicting advice about vitamin D supplementation from health experts. For example, Health Canada, Dietitians of Canada and the Canadian Pediatric Society currently recommend **all** breastfed infants receive a vitamin D supplement. However, the World Health Organization, La Leche League International and INFACCT Canada recommend **only** infants at risk receive a supplement



Some babies who are breastfed may not receive adequate amounts of Vitamin D. Not all health experts agree that vitamin D supplements are necessary.