

**DERBYSHIRE JOINT AREA PRESCRIBING COMMITTEE
(JAPC)**

Position statement of self-care with Vitamin D

JAPC continues to support the prescribing of high-dose vitamin D, usually as a short-course treatment, for the correction of diagnosed **deficiency** for adults and children. (See [vitamin D deficiency guidance](#) for primary care).

Following vitamin D deficiency long term self-care maintenance supplementation is advised. For **maintenance** (following treatment for deficiency), JAPC recommends that the patient is encouraged to make lifestyle changes such as increasing dietary intake of [vitamin D](#), increasing safe sun exposure and to purchase a supplement over the counter from a local pharmacy, health food shop or supermarket.

There is no routine monitoring or rechecking of serum vitamin D levels unless symptoms return or malabsorption and/or poor compliance is suspected.

Relevant Resources includes a local [Patient Information Leaflet](#).(available in several languages)

Recommended dosage for self-care of vitamin D for maintenance therapy following deficiency treatment and those with insufficiency (defined as 30-50nmol/l):

- 800units (20micrograms) daily for adults and
- 400-600units (10mcg -15micrograms) daily for children

Please note that preparations containing 1000 units (25 micrograms) are considerably cheaper to purchase than those containing 400 units (10 micrograms) or 800 units (20 micrograms). Adult patients can be advised that these are suitable to purchase for this indication.

Example of people for clinicians to consider at high risk of Vitamin D deficiency includes:

- Infants and children < 5 years of age.
- Pregnant and breastfeeding women, particularly teenagers and young women.
- People over 65.
- People who have low or no exposure to the sun, for example, those who cover their skin for cultural reasons, who are housebound or confined indoors for long periods.
- People with darker skin, for example, people of African, African-Caribbean or South Asian family origin.

Again the patient should be encouraged to make lifestyle changes such as increasing dietary intake of vitamin D, increasing safe sun exposure and to purchase a supplement over the counter from a local pharmacy, health food shop or supermarket.

Recommended dose for supplementation for the general population:

Age/ group	Advice
Infants from birth up to 1 year of age (exclusively or partially breastfed)	Should be given a daily supplement containing 8.5-10 micrograms (340 – 400 units) vitamin D. Babies fed infant formula should not be given a vitamin D supplement unless they are receiving less than 500mls (17.6 fl oz or about a pint) of formula a day as it is fortified with vitamin D and no other supplementation is required.
Children ages 1 – 4 years	Parents should be encouraged to purchase a daily supplement containing 10 micrograms (400 units) vitamin D. Some children aged 1 – 4 may be entitled to free Healthy Start vitamin drops.
General population ages 4 years and older including	Should be encouraged to purchase 10 micrograms (400units) vitamin D throughout the year. (NICE PH56, May 2017).

Pregnant and lactating women and populations at increased risk of vitamin D deficiency	Should be encouraged to purchase 10 micrograms (400units) vitamin D throughout the year . (NICE PH56, May 2017). Some pregnant women and new mothers may be entitled to free Healthy Start vitamins
Little or no UVB exposure	Should be encouraged to purchase a daily supplement containing 10 micrograms (400 units) vitamin D throughout the year. They are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • people who are seldom outdoors such as frail or housebound individuals and those who are confined indoors e.g. in institutions such as care homes • people who habitually wear clothes that cover most of their skin while outdoors.
People from minority ethnic groups with dark skin	e.g. African, African-Caribbean and South Asian origin Should be encouraged to purchase a vitamin D supplement containing 10 micrograms (400 units) throughout the year.

Exclusions

This position statement is not intended to affect the management of patients with osteoporosis or osteopenia who are receiving calcium and vitamin D products or Vitamin D preparations alone. Other excluded groups include patients treated with hyperparathyroidism, hypercalcaemia and patients receiving parenteral osteoporosis treatment.

References and resources

- NHS Choices Vitamin D <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/vitamins-minerals/Pages/Vitamin-D.aspx>
- Vitamin D: increasing supplement use in at-risk groups <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph56>
- Vitamin D and Health Report <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sacn-vitamin-d-and-health-report>
- Vitamin D: increasing supplement use in at-risk groups. Public health guideline [PH56] <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph56>
- NHS CKS Vitamin D deficiency in adults - treatment and prevention