

# Infant Vitamin D Drops for Healthy Bones in Children

## What is vitamin D and what does it do?

Vitamin D is a nutrient that helps keep bones and teeth strong and healthy. People can make vitamin D in their bodies by exposure to sunlight. Unfortunately, we don't have enough sunlight in Alaska during the colder months of the year to be able to make enough vitamin D. Vitamin D is found in some foods, especially oily fish and marine mammals, and in foods with added vitamin D (like milk).

## Why don't babies and toddlers get enough vitamin D?

Some babies are born without enough vitamin D. Some babies and toddlers don't get enough vitamin D after they are born from the foods they eat. Low vitamin D can cause rickets (soft bones). Infant vitamin D drops can prevent rickets.

## What is rickets?

Rickets is a disease caused by low vitamin D that results in soft bones. In infants, rickets can cause seizures (convulsions) from low calcium. In toddlers, rickets can cause curved legs, bone pain, and poor growth.

## Has rickets always been a problem in Alaska?

In the past, rickets was rare in Alaska. Most Alaska Native women had enough vitamin D from a traditional diet that included oily fish and marine mammals. Now, rickets is more common because many pregnant women have low vitamin D levels and more babies are born with low vitamin D levels.

## Recommendations for pregnant women

Pregnant women should take daily vitamin D supplements to prevent rickets. Pregnant women should take one Vitamin D tablet containing 1,000 international units (IU) per day.

## Recommendations for infants

Infants should take daily vitamin D supplements to prevent rickets.

- Infants getting any breast milk: Give two drops of infant D drops per day. There are 400 IU per drop, so two drops will equal 800 IU.
- Totally formula-fed infants: Give one drop of infant D drops (400 IU/drop) per day. There are 400 IU per 32 ounces of vitamin D in infant formula.

There are many types of vitamin D drops. Use vitamin D drops that give 400 IU with one drop from the bottle.



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