

New vitamin D guidelines from Osteoporosis Canada

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Comprehensive updated guidelines for vitamin D supplementation from Osteoporosis Canada provide physicians with the latest information, including new safe dose levels, in the latest online issue of *CMAJ* (*Canadian Medical Association Journal*).

Vitamin D, as well as calcium, is essential to preventing osteoporosis and may reduce other health risks such as diabetes and immune system disorders. While exposure to sunlight provides [vitamin D](#), Canadians are at risk of seasonal [vitamin D deficiency](#) because winter sunlight in northern latitudes above 35° does not contain enough ultraviolet B for vitamin D production. Supplementation is necessary to obtain adequate levels as [dietary intake](#) has minimal impact.

Current Canadian recommendations for "adequate intake" and "tolerable upper level" of vitamin D are more than 10 years old and were not based on properly conducted dose-finding studies.

The new guidelines recommend daily supplements of 400 to 1000 IU for adults under age 50 without osteoporosis or conditions affecting vitamin D absorption. For adults over 50, supplements of between 800 and 2000 IU are recommended. For people who need added supplementation to reach optimal vitamin D levels, doses up to the current "tolerable upper intake level" (2000 IU) are safely taken without medical supervision.

"A daily supplement of 25 mg (800 IU) should now be regarded as a minimum dose for adults with [osteoporosis](#)," writes Dr. David A. Hanley, University of Calgary Health Sciences Centre, Calgary, Alberta with coauthors. "Canadians can safely take daily vitamin D supplements up to the current definition of tolerable upper intake level (50 micrograms [2000 IU], but doses above that require medical supervision."

The authors conclude with a call for research into

optimal doses and safe upper limits for vitamin D intake. "Despite a great deal of new research in the past decade, these major clinical questions have still not been addressed to the satisfaction of most experts in the vitamin D field."

More information:

www.cmaj.ca/cgi/doi/10.1503/cmaj.080663

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