

New vitamin D recommendations for older men and women

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The International Osteoporosis Foundation (IOF) has released a new position statement on Vitamin D for older adults which makes important recommendations for vitamin D nutrition from an evidence-based perspective.

Vitamin D is important for bone and muscle development, function and preservation. For this reason it is a vital component in the maintenance of bone strength and in the prevention of falls and osteoporotic fractures.

The objective of this statement, published in the leading bone journal, *Osteoporosis International* (OI DOI 10 1007/s00198-010-1285-3), was to use and examine all available evidence to support new recommendations for optimal vitamin D status.

The best available clinical indicator of vitamin D status is serum 25OHD and vitamin D intake and effective sun exposure are the major determinants of this level. Serum 25OHD levels decline with ageing but the response to [vitamin D3](#) supplementation is not affected by age or by usual calcium [dietary intake](#).

Preventing vitamin D deficiency has a major impact on falls and osteoporotic fractures. [Vitamin D deficiency](#) is associated with decreased muscle strength in older men and women and supplementation improves lower limb strength and reduces risk of falling. Vitamin D affects fracture risk through its effect on [bone metabolism](#) and on falls risk.

Key recommendations:

- The estimated average vitamin D requirement of [older adults](#) to reach a serum 25OHD level of 75 nmol/l (30ng/ml) is 20 to 25 µg/day (800 to 1000 IU/day).
- Intakes may need to increase to as much as 50 µg(2000IU) per day in individuals who are obese, have osteoporosis, limited sun exposure (e.g. housebound or institutionalised), or have malabsorption.
- For high risk individuals it is recommended to measure serum 25OHD levels and treat if deficient.

The lead author of the statement, Professor Bess Dawson-Hughes of Tufts University, US, stated that, "Global vitamin D status shows widespread insufficiency and deficiency. This high prevalence of suboptimal levels raises the possibility that many falls and fractures can be prevented with [vitamin D](#) supplementation. This is a relatively easy public health measure that could have significant positive effects on the incidence of osteoporotic fractures."

Provided by International Osteoporosis Foundation

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