

Could Vitamin D Help Cut Winter Colds?



Last year, doctors called for kids and teens to add more vitamin D to their diets. The doctors' old guidelines said that kids needed 200 units of vitamin D each day. The new guidelines call for 400 units, which is about the amount of vitamin D found in four glasses of milk. Vitamin D helps keep bones strong, the doctors said. And it might cut the number of colds kids catch during the winter too.

But does vitamin D *really* help kill colds? Or are we just more likely to get colds in winter because we spend more time indoors where germs float around? Scientists are studying the effects of vitamin D right now. They are giving some people vitamin D pills. They're giving some other people pills that have no vitamins in them at all. The doctors will study the results to see if the people who take the real vitamin D pills get fewer colds.

So what can you do to make sure vitamin D is part of your diet?

- Drinking milk is one important way to get vitamin D.
- Egg yolks contain vitamin D.
- Vitamin D is added to many cereals, yogurt, cheese, and other foods. You can check the nutrition information on foods you eat to learn if they include vitamin D.
- Vitamin D is also found in oily fish such as tuna, salmon, and sardines.

NEWS WORD BOX

vitamin yogurt
guidelines yolk
nutrition sardines

One more very good source of vitamin D is the sun. Your body makes vitamin D when sun hits your skin. People tend to get more colds in winter than in summer because they get less sun during the winter months. Outdoor activity for 15 minutes a day can help build vitamin D, doctors say. (Of course you know that too much sun is *not* good for you.)

MORE ABOUT VITAMIN D

- Just as it is possible to get too little vitamin D, it is also possible to get too much.

THINK ABOUT THE NEWS

B vitamins are sometimes called “energy vitamins.” Now that you know a bit about vitamin D, what might be a good nickname for *it*?