

# VITAMIN D

## HOW DO I GET MY OPTIMAL AMOUNT?

**The most natural way to get vitamin D is by exposing your bare skin** to sunlight (ultraviolet B rays). This can happen very quickly, particularly in the summer. You don't need to tan or burn your skin to get vitamin D. You only need to expose your skin for around half the time it takes for your skin to turn pink and begin to burn.

The amount of vitamin D you get from exposing your bare skin to the sun depends on:

- The **time of day** – your skin produces more vitamin D if you expose it during the middle of the day.
- **Where you live** – the closer to the equator you live, the easier it is for you to produce vitamin D from sunlight all year round.
- **The color of your skin** – pale skins make vitamin D more quickly than darker skins.
- The **amount of skin** you expose – the more skin you expose the more vitamin D your body will produce.
- The **time of year**



Skin Type	Skin color	Skin characteristics
I	<i>Very fair; red or blond hair; blue eyes; freckles</i>	Always burns, never tans
II	<i>Fair; sandy or red hair; blue, hazel or green eyes</i>	Usually burns, tans with difficulty
III	<i>Fair; with any eye or hair color; very common</i>	Sometimes mild burn, gradually tans
IV	<i>Dark brown hair; green, hazel or brown eyes.</i>	Rarely burns, tans with ease
V	<i>Dark brown and black hair; brown and dark brown eyes.</i>	Very rarely burns, tans very easily
VI	<i>Black hair; dark brown eyes.</i>	May never burn, tans very easily

The paler your skin type the more easily your skin can produce vitamin D. So, if you have skin type I to III, you produce vitamin D more quickly than if you have skin type IV to VI. For example, if you have skin type I, it might take around 15 minutes of sun exposure to get the vitamin D you need, while if you have skin type V or VI, it might take up to six times longer (up to 2 hours).

Because of all these factors – your skin type, where you live and the time of day or season – it can be difficult to work out how much time you need to spend exposing your skin to the sun in order to get the vitamin D you need. A good rule of thumb is to get **half the sun exposure it takes for your skin to turn pink** to get your vitamin D and expose as much skin as possible.

Keep in mind - Sun exposure only works if you are **NOT WEARING SUNSCREEN**.



There are several other factors which can affect the amount of vitamin D your body makes from exposure to the sun. These are:

- **The amount of skin you expose.** The more skin you expose, the more vitamin D you can produce.
- **How old you are.** As you get older, your skin has a harder time producing vitamin D.
- Whether you're wearing **sunscreen**. Sunscreen blocks a lot of vitamin D production.
- The **altitude** you're at. The sun is more intense on top of a mountain than at the beach. This means you make more vitamin D the higher up you are (at higher altitudes).
- Whether it is **cloudy**. Less UVB reaches your skin on a cloudy day and your skin makes less vitamin D.
- **Air pollution.** Polluted air soaks up UVB or reflects it back into space. This means that if you live somewhere where there is lots of pollution, your skin makes less vitamin D.
- **Being behind glass.** Glass blocks all UVB, so you can't make vitamin D if you're in sunlight, but behind glass.

You can also get vitamin D by taking supplements. This is a good way to get vitamin D if you can't get enough sunlight, or if you're worried about exposing your skin. Vitamin D3 is the best kind of supplement to take.

Your body gets most of the vitamins and minerals it needs from the foods that you eat. However, there are only a few foods that naturally contain any vitamin D. Most foods that contain vitamin D only have small amounts, so it's almost impossible to get what your body needs just from food.

*All of this information was taken from [VitaminDCouncil.org](http://VitaminDCouncil.org).  
Visit them for the best extensive information about Vitamin D.*



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