

W I C *Tribune*

Onondaga County Health Department WIC Program Newsletter

Nutrition Spotlight: **The Importance of Vitamin D**

Why is Vitamin D Important?

Vitamin D is very important for infants and children. Vitamin D can keep you from getting sick and helps build healthy bones. If an infant or child does not get enough vitamin D, they may develop rickets. Rickets is a disease that causes the bones in the body to become soft and weak, which can lead to bowed legs. Making sure your child gets enough vitamin D can prevent this disease.

Vitamin D also helps the body absorb calcium. When the body does not have enough vitamin D or calcium as an infant or child, there is a higher risk of developing osteoporosis as an adult, which is a disease that causes bones to break easily. Making sure that your infant or child is getting enough vitamin D will help prevent this disease when they grow up.

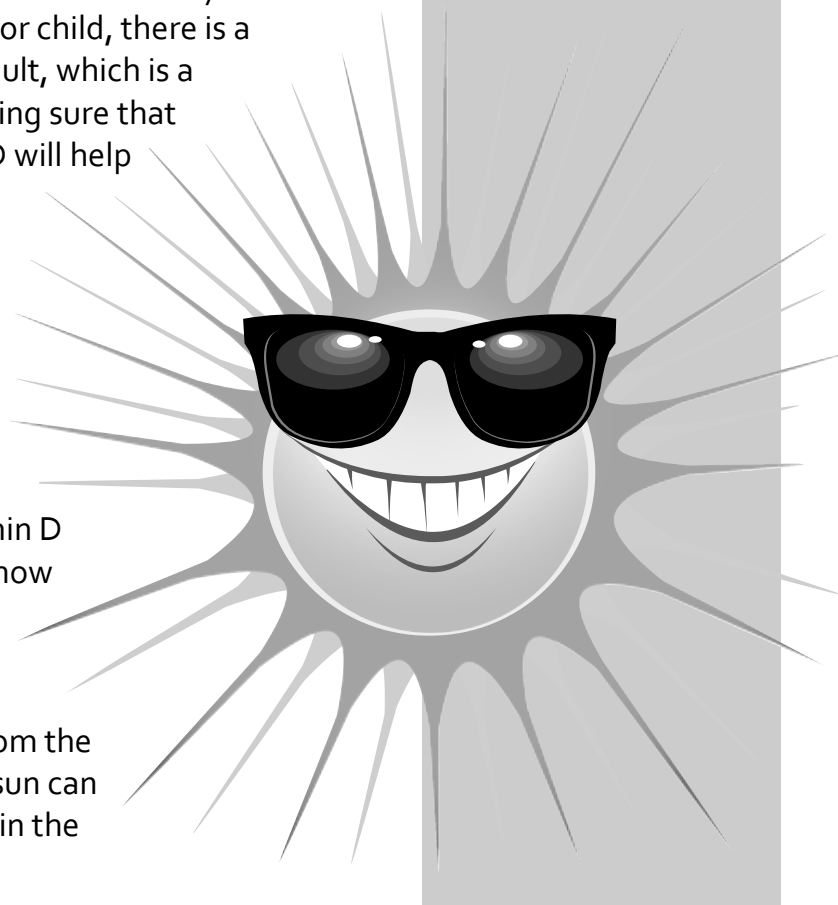
There are three main ways to get vitamin D: from the sun, from your diet, and from a supplement.

Vitamin D: From the Sun

Spending time in the sun allows our bodies to produce some vitamin D. The amount of Vitamin D that is made depends on the time of the year, how much skin is exposed to the sun, and how dark your skin is. Children whose skin is mostly covered with clothing or who have darker skin may not be able to make as much vitamin D from the sun. However, spending too much time in the sun can increase your risk for skin cancer, so limit time in the sun to no more than 20 minutes per day.

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Vitamin D: From your Diet

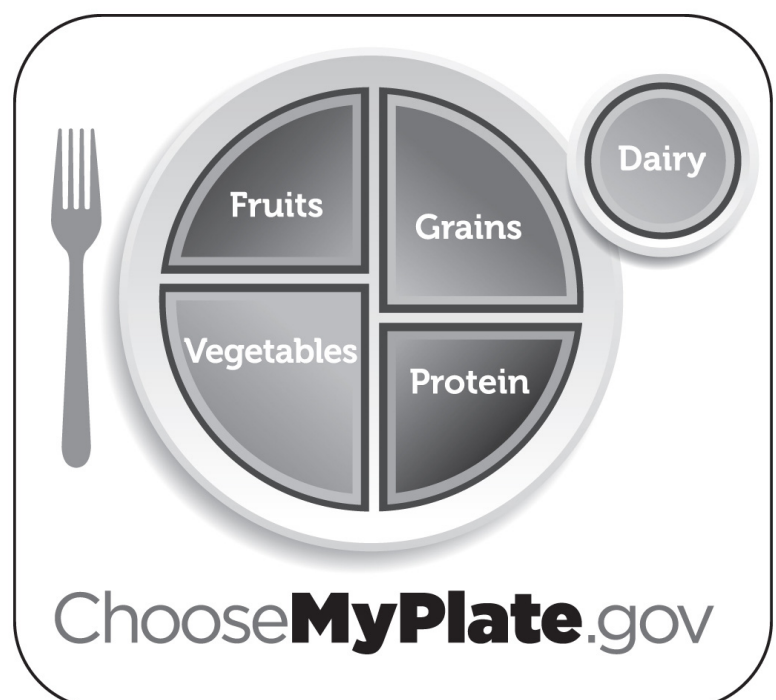
Another way to get vitamin D is through the diet. There are only a few foods that naturally have a lot of vitamin D, and these include fatty fish (such as salmon and tuna), egg yolks, and cheese. Milk and cereal that have vitamin D added to them are also a good dietary source.

Vitamin D: From a Supplement

Taking a Vitamin D supplement is a good way to make sure your infant or child is getting enough vitamin D. Infants who are fully breastfeeding and children who drink less than 4 cups of milk per day are at risk for vitamin D deficiency, and may need to take a Vitamin D supplement. However, children ages 1 to 5 should only be drinking 2 cups of milk each day. Because 2 cups of milk each day does not provide enough vitamin D, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children and fully breastfeeding infants get at least 400 IU of vitamin D through a daily supplement. Talk to your doctor about a vitamin D supplement for your child.

March is National Nutrition Month!

The theme of this year's National Nutrition Month is, "Eat Right, Your Way, Every Day." It is important that you are eating healthy foods, but you should have foods in your diet that you like and want to eat. Make sure that half your plate is fruits and vegetables, and that you are getting your protein from a variety of sources, such as lean meats (like chicken or turkey) and beans. Include whole grains such as whole wheat bread and brown rice in your diet, and aim for three servings of dairy each day. Be sure to spend a few minutes outside every day to help your body get enough vitamin D, and make sure your kids are also getting enough vitamin D. For more information about healthy eating go to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (formerly the American Dietetic Association) website at www.eatright.org.



Sweet Endings

Fill half your child's plate with fruits and vegetables. End a meal with fruit!

Spice up your fruit:

- Sprinkle with a little cinnamon
- Sprinkle with a little crushed graham cracker
- Top with a spoonful of yogurt
- Sprinkle with a teaspoon of crushed breakfast cereal

Keep it simple – offer fruit by itself:

- Dish of applesauce (*no added sugar or unsweetened variety only*)*
- Canned peaches or pears (*packed in water or juice only*)*
- Mandarin oranges
- Kiwi slices*
- Banana slices*
- Crushed pineapple (*packed in water or juice only*)*

*WIC Foods

Source: Nutrition Matters, Inc. – nubites No. 165

Healthy Resolutions

Make healthy resolutions this year that will improve your health and may even give you more energy! Try these tips and make it a happy and healthy new year!

- Remember to exercise! This will help maintain your weight and relieve the stress. Strive to move 30 minutes most days.
- Eat light snacks such as fruits and vegetables in between meals. They provide healthy vitamins and help curb your appetite!
- Enjoy an occasional treat but pay attention to the portion size.
- Re-think your drink. Soft drinks can lead to consuming many empty calories. Give water a try with an orange slice!

Maintaining a healthy weight can be a healthy resolution!

WIC News

- The WIC Program will be closed on Tuesday, January 1, 2013 for New Year's Day; Monday, January 21, 2013 for Martin Luther King Jr. Day; and Monday, February 18, 2013 for Washington's Birthday.
- For every WIC appointment you must have your WIC ID or photo ID. If you or your child is being enrolled on WIC or recertified there are a number of other documents needed for your WIC appointment so please call us to make sure you verify everything you need to bring to your WIC appointment.
- Check out WIC on Facebook at www.facebook.com/HealthyFamiliesOnondaga. The WIC Program posts a weekly message, make sure you go to our page, read our posts and "like" us!
- The WIC Program values your participation! Please call our office at 435-3304 if your phone number or address changes so that we can contact you for appointment reminders.
- Please call the WIC office if you cannot make your WIC appointment, so that this time can be offered to another WIC family.
- You only have to recertify your children once a year for WIC instead of twice a year! You will still have the opportunity to check on your child's growth six months after the certification appointment when we do a health and nutrition update (HNU).

Here's What's Cooking

Mini Pizzas Mini pizzas are fun for lunch or snack! Arrange ingredients on a plate. Let your child make his own special pizza.

Toast English muffins. Top English muffins with pizza sauce or tomato sauce and sprinkle with mozzarella cheese. Now decorate your pizza!

Make a happy face on your pizza:

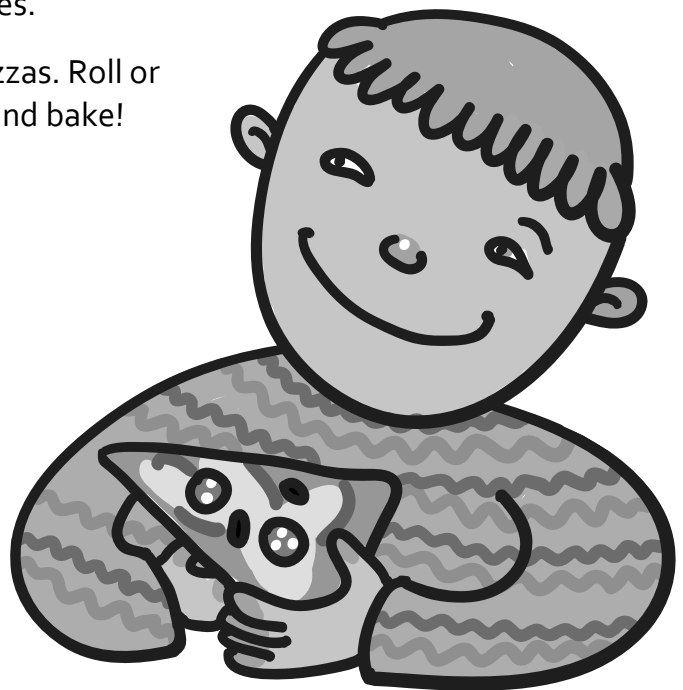
- Ham or turkey strips – eyes, nose or mouth
- Green or black olive slices – eyes
- Tomato, green or red pepper slices* – smiles
- Shredded carrots, shredded cheddar cheese, or chopped spinach* – hair
- Mushrooms* – eyes, nose or mouth

Bake mini pizzas in a 375° oven for about 5 to 10 minutes.

Refrigerator biscuit dough can also be used for mini pizzas. Roll or press out biscuit for each pizza, layer on the toppings and bake!

**WIC Foods*

Source: Nutrition Matters, Inc. – nubites No. 081






Onondaga County Health Department WIC Program
375 West Onondaga Street, Room 12, Syracuse, NY 13202 • 435-3304



Standards for participation in the WIC Program are the same for everyone regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, political beliefs or sex.

Joanne M. Mahoney, County Executive
Cynthia B. Morrow, MD, MPH, Commissioner of Health



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