Get a vitamin D test—but only if you need it

Some people don’t have enough vitamin D in their body. That’s why many doctors order a blood test for vitamin D.

It’s important to get a vitamin D test if you need it. But many people get this test even if they don’t need it.

Who needs a vitamin D test?

If your doctor orders a vitamin D test, ask why you need it. You may need a vitamin D test if you have:

- A disease that makes it hard for your body to use vitamin D, such as celiac, kidney, or liver disease
- Osteoporosis, which makes your bones more likely to break

If you do need a vitamin D test, ask your doctor which test is best. Be sure to get the same kind of test each time. That way, you can compare your results over time.

Your test results

If you have a low vitamin D level, talk with your doctor. Ask how to raise your level. Some ideas are listed on the back.

Learn more: ConsumerHealthChoices.org/catalog/vitamind
Get enough vitamin D

It’s important to have enough vitamin D in your body. If you don’t have enough, you are more likely to break your bones and have other health problems. Adults under 70 should get 600 international units (IU) of vitamin D each day. Adults 71 and older, need 800 IU each day. Below are some ways to boost your vitamin D level.

Soak up the sun

Your body makes vitamin D from sunlight. So take a 10-minute walk in the midday sun each day. This gives you up to 15 times the vitamin D you need. Your body stores some of the extra vitamin D.

Eat right

Choose foods rich in vitamin D. These include:
- Eggs
- Meat and chicken
- Seafood, such as shrimp, salmon, and sardines

Also look for items with added vitamin D. These include milk, orange juice and tofu.

Ask your doctor about pills

Ask your doctor if you should take a pill with vitamin D. But don’t take more than 4,000 IU of vitamin D a day unless your doctor says to. Too much vitamin D can harm your kidneys and other organs.