



ARTICLE

The Role of Vitamin D in Supporting Healthy Bone Growth in Toddlers

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Vitamin D plays a central role in a toddler's development of strong and healthy bones. It aids calcium absorption, which is required for bone growth and strength. Insufficient vitamin D levels predispose toddlers to develop weak, soft, or distorted bones- a condition known as rickets. This important nutrient is also involved in the overall growth process and in staving off problems associated with bones later in life. Vitamin D can be found in sunlight and is present in some foods as well as supplements raised when needed. It is essential to ensure a toddler's vitamin D status is adequate for their growing bodily function and long-term health.

Importance of Vitamin D in the Diets of your Toddler

People living in long winter areas usually lack adequate sunlight, which naturally contains vitamin D, thus making diet supplementation of vitamin D essential in keeping deficiency at bay. The food sources rich in vitamin D are not in plenty; hence, toddlers are less likely to regularly consume such foods. Meats, dairy products, and eggs have trace quantities of vitamin D3, while vitamin D2 is provided from mushrooms that are positioned in sunlight or UV light. In some countries, several foods like milk, infant formula, yogurt, cheese, juice, bread, and breakfast cereals contain added vitamin D to meet the dietary needs for this vitamin in the general population. Additional vitamin D is available in the form of a dietary supplement - either vitamin D2 or vitamin D3 - known to support overall health and development.

Recommended Daily Intake of Vitamin D for Toddlers

Toddlers usually get about 2 to 9 micrograms of vitamin D every day from their food, even in countries where foods are fortified with vitamin D. While supplements can help increase vitamin D intake, many toddlers do not take them regularly. The main food sources of vitamin D for toddlers are fortified products like milk, formula, breakfast cereals, and yogurt, as well as natural sources like meat and eggs.

Ways to Improve the Status of Vitamin D

Diet Alone Isn't Enough: So far, many toddlers do not get an adequate intake of vitamin D from their daily diet to reach recommended levels; hence, many are at risk of even deficient vitamin D status during this period of rapid growth.

Supplements Help, But Not for Everyone: Supplements of vitamin D encourage one to think they can raise vitamin D levels, but only for toddlers who take it, and many toddlers surely don't.

Food Fortification is a Better Solution: It is believed by public health experts that the fortification of food with vitamin D is really the best solution as it makes sure, most toddlers get it irrespective of their consumption of supplementation.

Milk is a Smart Choice for Fortification: Given that these foods are commonly drunk by toddlers, it is wise to fortify additional vitamin D into these foods since dairy products are widely consumed by them.

The Best Ways to Get Your Child's Daily Dose of Vitamin D

- Allow outdoor play for 15-30 minutes a few times a week so that the toddler would be able to make vitamin D from sunlight naturally.
- Give your toddlers vitamin D-fortified milk or formula to promote an adequate level of daily intake.
- Fibrous lutein should be increased in the diet during lunch or dinner for a good source of vitamin D.
- Provide fortified foods, such as breakfast cereals, yogurt, and orange juice, within the daily routine.

Vitamin D Supplements: When Should They Be Considered?

Supplements should be used when indicated. If your child is not benefiting from enough vitamin D from the food or sun, he/she should be evaluated by a physician regarding child-friendly vitamin D supplements. They are really helpful for picky eaters who don't consume enough vitamin D-rich foods like

fish, eggs, or fortified products. They may also be used in case the doctor suspects that a child's vitamin D levels are low. When it comes to growing toddlers, further vitamin D during a growth spurt will give them extra help relative to strong bone development. Kids with dietary restrictions, like vegans or those with lactose intolerance, might need supplementation to meet their daily vitamin D needs.

Why Fortified Foods Matter in Your Toddler's Diet

Fortified foods are beneficial to your toddler's diet because these foods complement nutrients like vitamin D that may be deficient in their normal meals. Fortified foods hence support the development of strong bones and a healthy immune system. Many toddlers do not get enough natural vitamin D, thus fortified options such as added milk, yogurt, and cereals can make a significant difference. Nestlé NANGROW™ is a perfect example of a product that provides important vitamins and minerals, including vitamin D, to support your toddler's growth. By selecting fortified foods, you're ensuring proper nutrition for your child's healthy development.

References

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