

Ready to start planning your care? Call us at [800-525-2225](tel:800-525-2225) to make an appointment.

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Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

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Vitamin D is a vitamin your body needs to keep your bones healthy. Your bones need calcium to stay strong and your body needs vitamin D to absorb calcium. This is why it's important to get vitamin D. You can get vitamin D from some foods like fortified milk and cereals, egg yolks, and fish. Your body can also make some vitamin D when you're exposed to sunlight.

If you don't get enough vitamin D, your healthcare provider may recommend you take vitamin D supplements, or take a multivitamin that has vitamin D.

What are the potential uses and benefits?

Vitamin D is used to:

- Prevent osteoporosis (a condition in which bones become weak and brittle)
- Treat a type of depression called seasonal affective disorder. This is related to the changes in season. It is seen mostly in people who live in climates where there is less sunlight during fall and

winter.

Vitamin D also has other uses that haven't been studied by doctors to see if they work.

It's safe to eat foods with vitamin D. However, talk with your healthcare providers before taking supplements or higher amounts of vitamin D.

Supplements can interact with some medications and affect how they work. For more information, read the "What else do I need to know?" section below.

What are the side effects?

Vitamin D is generally safe. But it can sometimes cause side effects such as:

- Vomiting (throwing up)
- Abdominal (stomach) pain
- High levels of calcium in the blood
- High levels of calcium in urine (pee)
- Kidney stones

What else do I need to know?

- Talk to your healthcare provider if you have kidney stones, kidney disease, high blood calcium levels, heart disease, or liver disease. Vitamin D supplements may make these conditions worse.
- Talk to your healthcare provider if you're taking diuretics or water pills (medications that make you urinate more often) such as indapamide (Lozol), hydrochlorothiazide (Microzide[®]), or chlorthalidone (Thalitone[®]). Vitamin D may increase the calcium level in your blood. This can weaken your bones and create kidney stones.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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