



Vitamin D

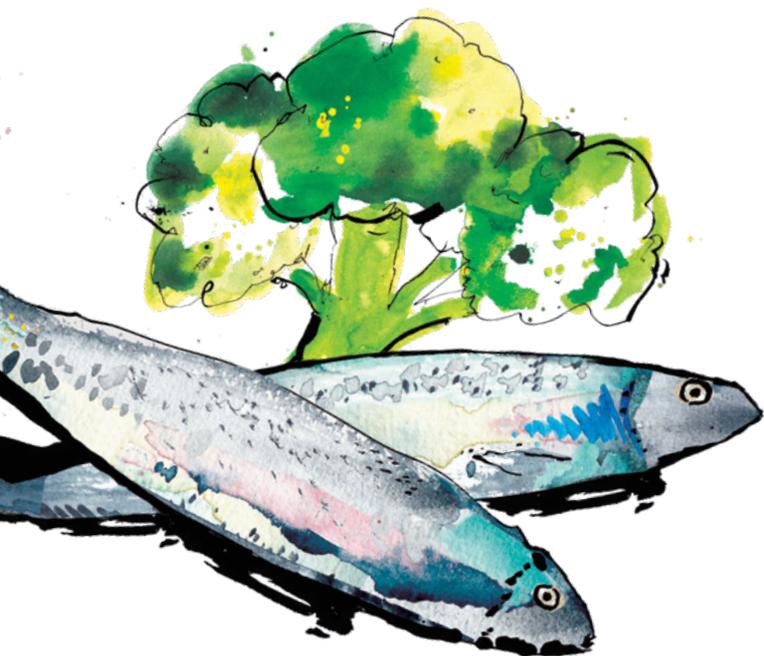
Top nutrients for women

Why is vitamin D important for women?

Vitamin D is needed to build and maintain healthy bones. It also helps support brain and hormonal health.

From around age 30, your bones start to lose strength. For women, this process speeds up after menopause when hormones, mainly oestrogen, drop. Vitamin D helps your body absorb calcium, which protects bone health.

It's not always obvious when you're low in vitamin D, but some people experience muscle and bone pain or fatigue. If you're worried, ask your doctor to check your vitamin D levels.



Where can I find vitamin D?

Vitamin D is made when your skin is exposed to sunlight.

You can boost your vitamin D with supplements. And you can also find it in small amounts in foods such as:

- oily fish (e.g. salmon, trout, tuna, herring, mackerel)
- egg yolks
- red meat
- some mushrooms
- milk and margarine that are enriched with vitamin D.



Keep in mind, it's hard to meet your vitamin D needs through food alone.

How can I get enough vitamin D?

In Australia, many women don't get enough vitamin D. If you spend most of your days indoors, have darker skin or wear clothes that cover most of your body, you may need to boost your vitamin D.

Getting enough vitamin D can be a difficult balancing act. Too much sun exposure can increase skin cancer risk, while not enough sun exposure increases the risk of vitamin D deficiency.



The amount of sunshine you need for good health also depends on your skin colour, age and location, as well as the time of day and the season.

Experts say that when the UV index is below 3, sun protection isn't recommended unless you spend most of your days outside. Try to get some sunshine in the middle of the day.

They also recommend that when the UV index is 3 or higher and you are outside for more than a few minutes, use sun protection (i.e. sunscreen, a hat, sunglasses, adequate clothing and shade). Most people get enough vitamin D from a few minutes of doing their usual outdoor activities each day.

It's also important to get regular exercise, which can help your body make vitamin D.

For information about your vitamin D levels or whether you might need a supplement, speak to your doctor.

What's the UV index?

You can check the UV index in your local area by downloading the free SunSmart app to your smartphone.

Also, search online for the Healthy Bones Australia 'Sunshine Map' for recommended sun exposure amounts in your area.



Still confused about healthy eating?

To help simplify the complicated, we've created seven more fact sheets on these important nutrients for women:

- Calcium
- Folate
- Iodine
- Iron
- Magnesium
- Protein
- Vitamin B

Get the fact sheets at

jeanhailes.org.au/resources/fact-sheets



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Disclaimer: This information does not replace medical advice. If you are worried about your health, talk to your doctor or healthcare team.

We write health information for people with diverse backgrounds, experiences and identities. We use the term 'women', but we acknowledge that this term is not inclusive of all people who may use our content.

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