

# ***Vitamin D<sub>3</sub>: a proven “D-fence” against falls***

## ***A guide for older adults***

Vitamin D<sub>3</sub> is important to help maintain strong muscles and bones. Vitamin D levels tend to decrease with age. The sun is one source of Vitamin D<sub>3</sub>, but is less reliable as we age, and varies with seasons. Taking Vitamin D<sub>3</sub> supplements year round is recommended to boost your Vitamin D level, strengthen muscles and bones, and prevent falls and fractures.

### ***Saskatoon Health Region supports***

Osteoporosis Canada’s recommendation that adults age 50 and over who are living at home in the community take 800-2000 IU daily of Vitamin D<sub>3</sub> supplement year round.

Doses up to 4000 IU daily of Vitamin D<sub>3</sub> for people living in long term care homes. Doses at this level would be on the advice of a physician, nurse practitioner or other health-care professional. Discuss any concerns or questions regarding dosages with your health-care provider first.

### ***Are there any side effects to taking Vitamin D<sub>3</sub> supplements?***

Doses taken at recommended levels or under the advice of a health-care practitioner can be taken safely.

### ***Should people have their Vitamin D level tested?***

Testing for Vitamin D levels is not routinely done before taking the supplement. Research studies show many older Canadians are Vitamin D deficient.

### ***Will supplements interfere with any of my other medication?***

How Vitamin D<sub>3</sub> is absorbed may be affected by certain medications. Talk to your pharmacist, physician or Nurse Practitioner for more information.

### ***How long will I need to take a Vitamin D<sub>3</sub> supplement before I will notice a difference?***

Some people will feel a difference right away, others may not feel a difference, but their bones and muscles will! Vitamin D<sub>3</sub> may take several weeks to reach beneficial levels and is recommended throughout the year.

### ***How does Vitamin D<sub>3</sub> work to reduce the risk for falls and fractures?***

Vitamin D<sub>3</sub> has been shown to:

- Improve muscle strength,
- Improve balance and mobility,
- Help maintain strong bones by assisting with calcium absorption.

### ***Are there any other health benefits of taking Vitamin D<sub>3</sub> supplements?***

Improved levels of Vitamin D<sub>3</sub> have been linked to improvements in many serious chronic illnesses, such as: rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, cardiovascular diseases, certain cancers, diabetes and depression.

### ***How do I take Vitamin D<sub>3</sub>?***

Vitamin D<sub>3</sub> comes in a variety of forms: tablet, liquid or chewable. It is your choice which forms to take.

