



## **Alternatives to Sunlight Exposure In Order to Ensure The Adequate Intake of Vitamin D**

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Although it is true that sunlight in the form of UVB rays reacts with a compound in our skin to make Vitamin D, we must also consider the harmful side effects that UVB radiation may cause.

Harmful effects of prolonged sun exposure include sunburn and some forms of skin cancer. A sunburn is not only painful, but it causes damage to your skin cells. Your body is now responsible for healing the damaged skin and you can impede the rate of healing if you are continually re-exposing your skin to the harmful UVB rays. Some people argue that they do not burn but “tan easily,” yet that tan we so covet is actually a defense response from your body to release melanin (the dark pigment in your skin that produces a tan) in an attempt to protect our skin and internal structures from the harmful rays of the sun. UV rays not only affect our skin, but our eyes are also at risk. Long-term sun exposure has been linked to the formation of cataracts.

Natural food sources that are high in Vitamin D include fatty fish varieties such as salmon, mackerel, sardines and fish liver oils (ex. cod liver oil). Eggs are another dietary source of Vitamin D.

Although we can find Vitamin D in food, we often do not eat enough of these foods to get an adequate amount of Vitamin D into our bodies. An effective and convenient alternative is to take a high quality Vitamin D supplement. There are various forms of Vitamin D, but the one that is most absorbable by humans comes in the form of Vitamin D3 (cholecalciferol). If you are going to take a supplement, make sure that the source is high in Vitamin D3 and that it is free of any additives and synthetic preservatives.

Adequate intake of Vitamin D in your health routine will help to ensure healthy bones, support immune health, improve seasonal depression and prevent cancer.