

Vitamin Supplements

Introduction

Everyone needs vitamins to allow the body to function properly. In Cystic Fibrosis some vitamins are needed in greater amounts.

1) Which vitamins do I need?

The fat-soluble vitamins A, D and E.

2) Why are they necessary?

These vitamins are found within the fat in our food. Although by controlling your absorption of fat with pancreatic enzymes, some fat and fat-soluble vitamins will still be passed in your stools. To ensure you have adequate levels of these vitamins in your blood we ask you to take vitamin supplements.

WHAT DO THESE VITAMINS DO?	
Vitamin A	Is important for healthy skin, hair and eyes. It is especially important for good vision in dim light.
Vitamin D	Helps the body absorb calcium from the diet and is important for maintaining healthy bones and teeth.
Vitamin E	Is needed for the production of red blood cells and is important for maintaining a healthy immune system, healthy skin and hair.
Vitamin K	If you have a liver problem you may be prescribed Vitamin K as well. This is because the body may need extra vitamin K to help with blood clotting.

3) How much of these vitamins should I take?

Most patients need the following amounts of vitamins:

Vitamins A and D - 2 capsules daily. Each capsule contains:-
Or 3 x multivitamins BPC vitamin A – 4000 IU, vitamin D – 400 IU

Vitamin E - 200iu daily (one tablet or 134mg gel capsule)

Vitamin K - the dose of this will vary for each patient, not all patients will need this vitamin.

Information for Patients

4) When should I take my vitamins?

Anytime of day, but ideally with food and enzymes. You can take all your vitamins at the same time.



5) How will I know if I am taking enough of these vitamins?

We will check your vitamin levels once a year by taking a blood sample. If your vitamin levels are not within the normal range we may change your vitamin prescription/dosage.

6) What will happen if I do not take my vitamins?

Your blood levels of these vitamins may become low and this can indicate vitamin deficiency. This can cause:

- **Low Vitamin A level** : night blindness – difficulty seeing when the light is dim.
- **Low Vitamin D level** : bone pain, increased risk of fractures and osteoporosis (thin, brittle bones).
- **Low Vitamin E level** : deficiency is rare, but can cause poor muscle co-ordination.

7) Should I take any other vitamins or health supplements?

Some health supplements may contain vitamins A, D and E. As these vitamins are stored in the body it is important that you do not take more than recommended by your doctor and dietician. If you are taking any additional vitamins or health supplements, please let the dietician know so she can advise you if it is safe to continue taking them.

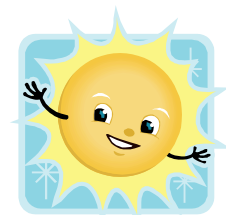


8) Remember – sunlight can help your vitamin D levels!

You can help improve your vitamin D level by having regular sunlight exposure. Vitamin D is made in the body from the action of sunlight on the skin. Short periods outside (at least 15 minutes exposure on hands and face) on bright days should be enough to make some vitamin D.



Be careful not to get sunburnt!



Contact us:

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this information, please contact one of our CF Dieticians:- on 0121 424 1796 (direct line with answer phone) or 0121 424 2000 Bleep 2425 or email: joanne.barrett@heartofengland.nhs.uk, toni.osborne@heartofengland.nhs.uk, elizabeth.glennon@heartofengland.nhs.uk, rebecca.jones@heartofengland.nhs.uk

Additional Information Sources:

For more information on all aspects of living with Cystic Fibrosis you can visit the Cystic Fibrosis Trust web site at: www.cftrust.org.uk. For local news and events the West Midlands Regional Cystic Fibrosis Unit based at Heartland Hospital has its own website at: www.heartlandscf.org.uk.

This booklet was produced by CF Dieticians, West Midlands Adult CF Centre, and Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust.

Information for Patients

Please use the space below to write down any questions you may want to ask: