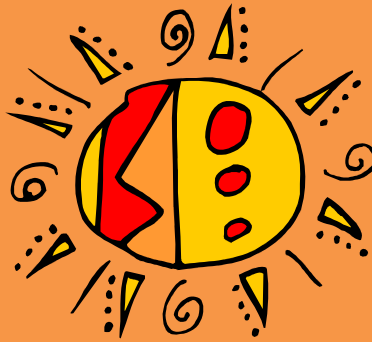


SMALL AMOUNTS OF SUMMERTIME SUNSHINE



Did you know that vitamin D, “the sunshine vitamin,” is essential for overall health and prevention? In fact, vitamin D deficiency is now being linked to many chronic diseases including diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease autoimmune disorders and cancer. Keep in mind that while excessive sun exposure can be harmful to our skin, we get 90-100% of our vitamin D requirements from the sun. The rest comes from natural and fortified dietary sources like oily fish, vitamin D-fortified foods such as milk and orange juice and vitamin supplements.

For most people as little as 10-20 minutes a week of direct sun shine, ideally on the top of the head, can yield adequate amounts of vitamin D. There are however some considerations.

1. Sunscreens as low as SPF 18 decrease vitamin D synthesis by 97.5%
2. During the months between October and April, sunlight provides no vitamin D to the skin at latitudes above 35 degrees.
3. Older adults have approximately 25 percent of the capacity to produce vitamin D compared to young, healthy adults and children.
4. A sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 should be used for any exposure beyond 20 minutes.

Source: Food and Nutrition Board of the Institute of Medicine

