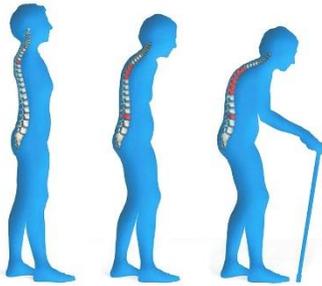


## What is Calcium and Vitamin D?



- **Calcium and vitamin D** are essential to building strong, dense bones when you're young and to keeping them strong and healthy as you age.
- **Calcium** is a mineral that is necessary for life. In addition to building bones and keeping them healthy, calcium enables our blood to clot, our muscles to contract, and our heart to beat. About 99% of the calcium in our bodies is in our bones and teeth.
- **Vitamin D** plays an important role in protecting your bones, both by helping your body absorb calcium and your overall health. Children and adults need vitamin D to keep their bones strong and healthy. If you do not get enough vitamin D, and you are more likely to break bones as you age.

## Where can I get Vitamin D and Calcium?

### Vitamin D3 can be found in some foods:

- Fish oils and species of fish such as salmon, tuna, sardines, mackerel, halibut and herring, are all excellent sources of vitamin D3.
- Eating oily fish twice a week can help to supply your vitamin D requirements, depending on the portion size.
- Dairy products, margarine, eggs and chicken livers.
- Some milk products and margarines are fortified with vitamin D.
- Breakfast cereals, soya milk and rice milk may also be fortified with vitamin D.
- Sunlight from the sun - 15 minutes in total, then apply sunblock, but only if you do not burn easily.



### Calcium can be found in some foods:

- You need to ensure that the food you eat is rich in calcium. Dairy products are one of the best sources of Calcium, especially the fortified milks, not only do they have calcium but also have vitamin D. The best sources of calcium are milk, cheese and yoghurt. Bread, nuts and any oily fish (e.g. sardines and tuna) also contain calcium, as do some dark green vegetables. Some brands of orange juice and some breakfast cereals have added calcium.

\*Note: There are vitamin D and calcium supplements/drops available for those who cannot get their amounts through food or for those who have dietary restrictions and/or other factors.

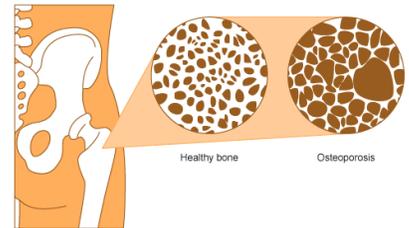
## To determine how much Vitamin D is needed from food and supplements, the following should be considered:

- Your age, as you age your ability to produce vitamin D from the sun is reduced.
- The time of year - Summer or winter.
- Where you are living - What latitude.
- The amount of time you spend outside in the sun.
- Usage and level of sunscreens.
- Make up - Blocks vitamin D and many have sun block in them.
- Skin moisturizers that contain sun block.
- Your skin colour - darker skinned people absorb less vitamin D from the sun.
- Burkas for religious reasons.

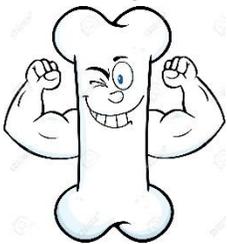


## Causes of Low Vitamin D should be Found and Addressed

- Two common reasons for the low levels of vitamin D in Ireland, are the lack of sunshine and the fact that only a few foods naturally contain vitamin D.
- Due to Ireland's northerly latitude, very little UV light is available between October and March, which can result in low levels of vitamin D.
- It is rare that people can get enough vitamin D in the summer months, due to the lack of sunshine.
- In Ireland 74% of adults and 88% of primary school children, have less than half of the recommended daily amount of vitamin D.



## How can you help the Irish Osteoporosis Society Charity?



The Irish Osteoporosis Society are the National experts in Ireland on Osteoporosis. We operate the National Osteoporosis helpline, National website and distribute information to the public as well as healthcare professionals throughout the nation. If you have been diagnosed, please help support our services at €3.30 a month/€40 a year. Send us your story, which will help us raise awareness that this condition can affect anyone, but that it is treatable.

Please log onto our website: [www.irishosteoporosis.ie](http://www.irishosteoporosis.ie), become a member, "like" us on Facebook, or follow us on Twitter to receive more information and keep up to date with news and events.