



CANADIAN DERMATOLOGY ASSOCIATION POSITION STATEMENT SAFE AND EFFECTIVE WAY TO MAINTAIN ADEQUATE LEVELS OF VITAMIN D

Canadians have two options to maintain vitamin D levels: oral intake and sun exposure. Taking vitamin D through vitamin supplements is the optimal and safest way.

- To obtain sufficient vitamin D, there is no need to seek increased or prolonged sun exposure. The incidental sun exposure that Canadians receive, even with sunscreen use, may be sufficient to maintain optimal vitamin D levels during the summer. During the winter months, a vitamin supplement may be considered.
- Canadians should avoid increasing their sun exposure since there is strong evidence that UV radiation from the sun causes skin cancer. Skin cancers, such as melanoma and squamous cell carcinoma, can be fatal. All forms of skin cancer require timely treatment, which can cause pain, scarring and disfigurement. Skin cancer affects approximately 1 out of seven Canadians, and is largely preventable by limiting exposure to the sun, protecting the skin from UV radiation, and avoiding tanning beds. Sunscreen has been shown to prevent melanoma, squamous cell carcinoma and precancerous actinic keratoses.
- Use of indoor tanning to promote vitamin D production increases a person's risk of developing skin cancer including melanoma. The Canadian Dermatology Association, along with Health Canada and the World Health Organization, strongly discourage tanning bed use. The use of tanning beds is illegal for minors in most provinces in Canada.

In summary: It is unsafe and unnecessary to increase sun exposure in order to maintain vitamin D levels.

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