

# Vitamin and Mineral Supplements

If your toddler eats a variety of foods and is growing well, they probably don't need extra vitamins or minerals, with 2 possible exceptions:

## Vitamin D

### Why your toddler needs it

To build healthy bones and teeth.

### How much your toddler needs

**600 IU** each day from Vitamin D supplement as well as food sources for children 12 months and over.



### BE AWARE

- Talk with your health care provider before giving your toddler any supplement.
- Only give supplements approved for your child's age.
- Don't tell your child that supplements are candy. Keep them out of their reach.
- Don't give your toddler cod liver oil or other fish liver oils, which contain dangerous amounts of vitamin A.
- To prevent choking, only give your toddler gummies or chewable tablets after crushing or chopping them into small bits.

### How to get it

Some vitamin D comes from sunshine, but it's not enough for our bodies. The rest comes from eating certain foods.

- egg: 1 yolk = 32 IU
- soft margarine: 1 teaspoon (5 ml) = 35 IU
- salmon: 30 grams (1 oz) = 82 to 257 IU
- formula: 1 cup (250 ml) = 100 IU
- cow's milk (not recommended before 9 months): 1 cup (250 ml) = 100 IU

### When a supplement is needed

**Until they're 24 months old**, give your toddler 400 IU of liquid vitamin D each day if they:

- breastfeed or chestfeed, or drink both human milk and formula
- breastfeed or chestfeed and drink some cow's milk or vitamin D-fortified goat's milk
- don't drink 2 cups of cow's milk and eat a variety of other vitamin D-rich foods every day
- drink goat's milk that isn't fortified with vitamin D

**After they're 24 months old**, your toddler may need a supplement to reach the recommended 600 IU per day. Give them 400 IU of vitamin D each day if they don't have 2 cups of cow's milk or fortified soy beverage and a variety of other vitamin D-rich foods every day.

## Iron

### Why your toddler needs it

For growth and brain development.

### How much your toddler needs

**2 or more servings** of iron-rich foods per day.

### How to get it

From foods high in iron, including meat, poultry, fish, iron-fortified infant cereals, eggs, tofu, beans and other legumes.

### When a supplement may be needed

Talk with your health care provider if your toddler:

- was premature
- doesn't eat enough iron-rich foods
- drinks more than 3 cups (750 ml) of milk each day
- is vegetarian or vegan (see [Vegetarian and Vegan Toddlers](#))

For more information about vitamin and mineral supplements, call a HealthLink BC dietitian at 8-1-1.