Vitamin D: What, Why, & How Much?

What is the latest information on vitamin D?
- New research shows that this important nutrient is needed in greater amounts than we used to think.
- Changes in the way we live, like reducing how much time we spend in the sun, have made it harder for us to get enough vitamin D.

Why is vitamin D important?
- Vitamin D helps make strong bones and teeth. It also helps to prevent rickets, which is a softening and weakening of bones in children.
- Vitamin D may help prevent illness, heart disease, some types of cancer, diabetes and other diseases.
- Even a mild lack of vitamin D may lead to mental or physical delays, unusual irritability, muscle or joint pain, and poor growth.

How much vitamin D do children need each day?
- Vitamin D is measured in international units (IU).
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends 400 IU each day for infants and 600 IU for children.

Who needs a vitamin D supplement?
- The use of a supplement is recommended for infants who are breastfed, and infants who consume less than 32 oz. of formula each day.
- Talk with your healthcare provider if you have questions about taking supplements or offering them to your children.