

Press Release

Health Food Manufacturers' Association advises Vitamin D supplements may help safeguard against dietary deficiencies as food costs rise

During the past three years awareness of food supplements, and their role in helping the nation stay healthier, has continued to increase. The Government's roll-out of vitamin D supplementation to those in vulnerable categories, gave a clear signal that this nutrient is essential to wellbeing. Government advice continues to recommend 10 micrograms daily from October to March.

Health practitioners are keen to highlight the value of food supplements for those at risk of insufficient intake, especially when consumers are changing their buying patterns, and adapting to rising food costs.

Office for National Statistics Consumer Price Inflation figures for October 2022⁽¹⁾ show that food and non-alcoholic beverage prices increased by 16.4%, with many consumers now making choices about how often, or even whether, these certain food items are purchased. From a nutritional health perspective, this is not without impact.

Foods with highest price increases include milk, cheese and eggs, all major contributors to vitamin D intakes in the British diet⁽²⁾

According to the Department of Health and Social Care, 'around 1 in 6 adults and almost 20% of children in the UK have vitamin D levels lower than government recommendations. Older people, the housebound and people from Black and South Asian communities are more likely to have lower levels of the vital vitamin.'⁽³⁾

Dr Michele Sadler, Scientific Advisor to the Health Food Manufacturers' Association said, *"If people cut out whole food groups because of rising prices, insufficient intake of certain nutrients becomes more likely. This is particularly true for vitamin D, for which milk, meat, fish, eggs and breakfast cereals are important dietary sources. Following Government recommendations to take a 10 micrograms vitamin D supplement daily, will be even more important."*

Dr Sadler also highlights that consumers can confidently take vitamin D when self-supplementing, commenting *"There is a wide margin of safety between the upper safe intake of vitamin D and daily requirements such that supplementation with 25 micrograms per day, and even up to 75 micrograms vitamin D daily, is within safety limits"*. The NHS recommends a maximum daily dose of 100 micrograms.

Nutrition scientists, and industry, have called for the Government to consider raising the vitamin D supplementary Guidance from 10 micrograms daily to 25 micrograms. The HFMA supports the suggestion that there is a need for a recommendation of a higher dose. Supplements are a useful and safe resource for those concerned about insufficient intake of nutrients. Practitioners and health food shops can support consumers choose the supplement for their lifestyle.

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Notes to Editors

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PRESS NOTES:

About the HFMA

The HFMA, the voice of the UK's natural health industry since 1965, represents around 150 manufacturers and suppliers of natural health products. As the authoritative voice of the natural products industry, the HFMA supports the interests of its members with legislators and regulators; promotes industry best practice for product quality and safety; and provides responsible information for consumers.

For further information about the HFMA, visit www.hfma.co.uk

Key Points and References:

- During lockdown, more people than ever have started taking Food Supplements⁽¹⁾
- Government messaging around supplementation, in particular vitamin D, had a direct effect on sales of this nutrient, with many considering a supplement for the first time⁽²⁾
- Nutrition practitioners continue to promote use of supplementation in those at risk of low levels from poor dietary intakes
- Nutrition Experts highlight that, with food prices increasing, risk of lower nutrient intake could increase from lower food intake, and reduced food variety
- Food Supplements, recommended to help safeguard against deficiency of key nutrient are showing an upward trend, reported by members of the Health Food Manufacturers' Association

(1) [Consumer price inflation, UK - Office for National Statistics](#)

(2) Data from the latest National Diet and Nutrition Survey
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1019663/Follow_up_study_2020_main_report.pdf

(3) Department of Health and Social Care review on Vitamin D intake April 2022
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-review-launched-into-vitamin-d-intake-to-help-tackle-health-disparities>