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Calcium and Vitamin D - Why Do I Need To Take It Every Day? (Instructions on how to take the necessary amounts)

Most children/adolescents ARE NOT getting enough Calcium and Vitamin D. We are seeing evidence of Vitamin D deficiency in infants and children of all ages as well as adolescents and adults. There is evidence that Vitamin D not only makes for strong bones, but plays a role in preventing some chronic diseases later in life, including those involving the body's ability to fight infection and to keep the heart healthy.

The body needs Vitamin D to absorb calcium. Calcium is needed to build and maintain strong bones and teeth. Without enough Vitamin D, your body can't form enough of active Vitamin D. This in turn leads to poor calcium absorption from the diet. In this situation, the body must take calcium from its stores in the skeleton, which weakens existing bone and prevents the formation of strong, new bone. **Low Vitamin D puts you at risk for increased fractures.**

We checked your Vitamin D level today with a blood test. We will call you in 48 hours to let you know what your Vitamin D level is. Ideal Vitamin D levels are over 30, but over 20 is acceptable. If your Vitamin D level is less than 20, we will prescribe a high dose Vitamin D supplement that must be taken once a week for 12 weeks (3 months). In most cases, this will raise your Vitamin D level above 20. However, in order to keep your Vitamin D level above 20, it will be necessary to continue to take additional Vitamin D and Calcium every day forever.

If you level is under 15, we will want to have you come back in 3 months to have your Vitamin D rechecked to be sure your level has increased. Sometimes treatment requires another 3 months of treatment. Please make the appointment to have the level rechecked when we call you with the results. The appointment is only to have blood drawn.

Once you are finished the 3 months of high dose Vitamin D, you must take an over the counter multivitamin that contains **1000 iu of Vit D** and a separate over the counter combination tablet that contains **1000 iu of Vitamin D and 1000 mg of Calcium**. An alternative is to take **2000 iu of Vitamin D and 1000 mg of Calcium** daily. There are pills and chewable tablets available.

The high dose Vitamin D comes as a small capsule, but for someone who cannot swallow a capsule, there is a high dose Vitamin D chewable available. Not all insurances cover this. The high dose capsule is covered by insurance. We will prescribe 12 capsules. Depending on your insurance, you may only receive 4 pills per month. Remember to go back each month to the pharmacy to pick up the next month's supply to complete the full course of treatment. You should not have to pay a copay each month as the script is for 3 months of treatment.

Another good source of Vitamin D and Calcium is milk. 24 ounces/day of low fat milk and an over the

counter multivitamin will provide the majority of your daily Calcium and Vitamin D requirements. Yogurt and cheese have minimal amounts of Vitamin D and Calcium. Please ask us for our handout on Vitamin D and Calcium that lists other foods that contain Calcium and Vitamin D.

This information should not be used as substitute for the medical care and advice of your child's physician. Health related topics found on the Andorra Pediatrics web site should not be used for diagnosing purposes or be substituted for medical advice. As with any new or ongoing treatment, always consult your professional healthcare provider before making any changes in treatment or beginning any new treatment. If you have any questions or concerns, please call our office.