Vitamin D in care homes update April 2021

What to do when the free supply of Vitamin D runs out.

PHE/NICE [Guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vitamin-d-supplementation-during-winter-phe-and-nice-statement/statement-from-phe-and-nice-on-vitamin-d-supplementation-during-winter) recommends that people living in care homes should take vitamin D supplements all year round as they are less likely to go outdoors in the Summer months than other groups of people.

To support this, the DHSC provided a free supply of vitamin D for people living in care homes. This was a one off four month supply and there are no current plans to repeat this free supply.

The [DHSC guidance on vitamin D](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vitamin-d-for-vulnerable-groups/vitamin-d-and-care-homes-guidance) identifies the use of Vitamin D 10 micrograms daily to supplement the person's diet as part of the requirement on the home to meet the nutritional needs of the person. In addition, [CQC has produced guidance](https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/adult-social-care/vitamin-d-supplements-supporting-people-who-receive-adult) which states "CQC expects providers to support people’s full nutritional needs. This includes supplementation with vitamin D throughout the year as recommended by PHE."

**As such GPs should not routinely prescribe the vitamin D 10 micrograms where it is being used as a dietary supplement. Care homes are asked not to contact the GP practice for ongoing supplies. This does not affect the prescribing of vitamin D for an identified clinical need.**

Care homes should discuss the provision of ongoing supply of vitamin D with the residents (or their representatives) including whether they wish to take it all year round.

People moving into the care home should be also be offered the risk assessment to determine if vitamin D supplementation is appropriate in line with the [DHSC guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vitamin-d-for-vulnerable-groups/vitamin-d-and-care-homes-guidance). Advice should continue to be sought from a healthcare professional as indicated in the guidance.

Unless preferred/needed by the resident, it is not necessary to use a liquid preparation. People may prefer to take a capsule or tablet formulation.

Care homes and residents are advised to obtain vitamin D preparations from a reputable source. Care should be taken when selecting products to check the amount of vitamin D included as many preparations available contain higher amounts than the recommended 10 micrograms (400 units). Pharmacists can advise on product selection if needed.