# Position statement - Vitamin D prescribing in adults

- **Only prescribe vitamin D for time limited treatment of diagnosed vitamin D deficiency (do not prescribe on repeat)**
- **For all other indications including maintenance doses, vitamin D is to be bought over the counter**

**Recommendations**

- **Only prescribe** vitamin D loading dose (as an acute prescription) for those with a diagnosed deficiency (25-hydroxyvitamin D (25-OHD) <30nmol/L) as per HWE ICB vitamin D guidelines
- **Deprescribe** the following strengths of vitamin D3 tablets: 400IU, 500IU, 600IU, 800IU, 1000IU, 2,000IU, 2,200IU, 2,500IU, 3,000IU, 3,200IU, 5,000IU, 5,600IU, 6,000IU, 10,000IU, 25,000IU, 30,000IU.

**Rationale**

Asymptomatic patients who are at higher risk of vitamin D deficiency should be advised to purchase maintenance dose vitamin D supplementation OTC.

NICE states that maintenance dose vitamin D supplementation should be bought OTC.

NHSE "policy guidance: Conditions for which over the counter items should not be routinely prescribed in primary care" states that "*vitamins may be prescribed for people with a medically diagnosed deficiency, including for those who may have a lifelong or chronic condition, or have undergone surgery that results in malabsorption. Continuing need should however be reviewed on a regular basis. Maintenance or preventative treatment is not an exception*." This policy applies to vitamin D prescribing.

**When low dose vitamin D is recommended:**

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) advises that all adults should take a 10 microgram (400IU) vitamin D supplement during the autumn and winter.

Higher risk individuals (including people aged 65 years and over, those with darker skin and those with limited sun exposure) are advised to take a 10 microgram (400IU) vitamin D supplement all year round - see British Dietetic Association Vitamin D guidance.

**Vitamin D and vegan diets**

There are no licensed vegan vitamin D supplements, including all Ergocalciferol products. See Vegan society: Veganism and medications or SPS: Vitamin D in Veganism.

**Prescribing vitamin D with calcium**

Adequate levels of both vitamin D and calcium are needed to ensure optimum serum calcium levels, and it is important to ensure that levels of both are maintained to prevent long-term adverse effects on bones. Patients can check the adequacy of their calcium intake using British Dietetic Association Calcium guidance. Calcium supplementation is contraindicated in primary hypercalcaemia and metastatic skeletal disease.

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