

**Cholecalciferol**  
(Vitamin D<sub>3</sub>)

Patient Information

Updated: 10.2019

*As of this writing, vitamin D is still being investigated for its role in multiple sclerosis.*

*Ask your provider for the most up to date information.*

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| USED FOR                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slowing the progression of multiple sclerosis (MS). Although it is not fully understood, low Vitamin D levels may be linked to immune system function and risk of MS.</li> <li>Vitamin D can also provide additional benefits of decreasing the risk of fractures, osteoporosis, and osteopenia.</li> </ul>  |
| HOW IT WORKS               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vitamin D helps regulate the immune system and protect nerve cells from further damage.</li> <li>It can also help the body absorb calcium to maintain bone health.</li> </ul>  |
| HOW IT IS SUPPLIED         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available over-the-counter (OTC) and by prescription in many forms and brands:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vitamin D3 (cholecalciferol) 400 IU (international units), 1000 IU, 2000 IU, 5000 IU, 25000 IU, 50000 IU in capsules or tablets or liquids.</li> <li>Vitamin D2 (ergocalciferol) 400 IU, 2000 IU, 50,000 IU in capsules or tablets.</li> <li><b>Vitamin D3 (cholecalciferol) is preferable to Vitamin D2 because it is more active.</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| HOW IT IS GIVEN            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vitamin D may be taken with or without food. Fat-containing meals may enhance vitamin D absorption.</li> </ul>   |
| DOSE                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your dose of vitamin D will vary depending on your individual needs, but will usually be 5000 units by mouth once a day.</li> </ul>  |
| OTHER SOURCES OF VITAMIN D | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vitamin D is often referred to as the “sunshine vitamin” because sunlight helps the body make the active form of Vitamin D.</li> <li>It is also found in egg yolks, fatty fish (such as salmon), fortified fish, fortified milk, and fortified cereal.</li> </ul>  |
| STORAGE                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vitamin D may be kept at room temperature. Keep the medication away from direct sunlight, extreme heat, or cold.</li> </ul>  |



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| COMMON SIDE EFFECTS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally there are no side effects or minimal side effects with taking Vitamin D unless too much is taken.</li> <li>• Serious side effects associated with taking too much Vitamin D include diarrhea, loss of appetite, frequent urination, frequent thirst, headache, and mood changes.</li> </ul>  |
| DRUG INTERACTIONS   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before starting or stopping ANY medication or supplements, please notify your pharmacist to check for interactions.</li> <li>• Some medications can affect the absorption of Vitamin D such as a medication for losing weight called Orlistat (Xenical, Alli) and cholesterol medications called colestipol (Colestid) or cholestyramine. If you take long-term Statin medications to control cholesterol or steroids (corticosteroids), this may cause low Vitamin D levels over time.</li> </ul> |
| MONITORING          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You may have regular blood tests for vitamin D levels (25-hydroxyvitamin D) and your dose may be adjusted if the level is low.</li> <li>• Your target Vitamin D level should be middle of the normal range</li> </ul>  |
| MORE INFORMATION    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Websites: <a href="http://www.nationalmssociety.org">www.nationalmssociety.org</a></li> </ul>  |