### Used For
- 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.
- Vitamin D can also provide additional benefits of decreasing the risk of fractures, osteoporosis, and osteopenia.

### How It Works
- Vitamin D helps regulate the immune system and protect nerve cells from further damage.
- It can also help the body absorb calcium to maintain bone health.

### How It Is Supplied
- Available over-the-counter (OTC) and by prescription in many forms and brands:
  - Vitamin D3 (cholecalciferol) 400 IU (international units), 1000 IU, 2000 IU, 5000 IU, 25000 IU, 50000 IU in capsules or tablets or liquids.
  - Vitamin D2 (ergocalciferol) 400 IU, 2000 IU, 50,000 IU in capsules or tablets.
  - **Vitamin D3 (cholecalciferol) is preferable to Vitamin D2 because it is more active.**

### How It Is Given
- Vitamin D may be taken with or without food. Fat-containing meals may enhance vitamin D absorption.

### Dose
- Your dose of vitamin D will vary depending on your individual needs, but will usually be 5000 units by mouth once a day.

### Other Sources of Vitamin D
- Vitamin D is often referred to as the “sunshine vitamin” because sunlight helps the body make the active form of Vitamin D.
- It is also found in egg yolks, fatty fish (such as salmon), fortified fish, fortified milk, and fortified cereal.

### Storage
- Vitamin D may be kept at room temperature. Keep the medication away from direct sunlight, extreme heat, or cold.
### COMMON SIDE EFFECTS
- Generally there are no side effects or minimal side effects with taking Vitamin D unless too much is taken.
- Serious side effects associated with taking too much Vitamin D include diarrhea, loss of appetite, frequent urination, frequent thirst, headache, and mood changes.

### DRUG INTERACTIONS
- Before starting or stopping ANY medication or supplements, please notify your pharmacist to check for interactions.
- 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.

### MONITORING
- You may have regular blood tests for vitamin D levels (25-hydroxyvitamin D) and your dose may be adjusted if the level is low.
- Your target Vitamin D level should be middle of the normal range.

### MORE INFORMATION
- Websites: [www.nationalmssociety.org](http://www.nationalmssociety.org)