



# Why Vitamin D Is Important During Lockdown

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With coronavirus having disrupted lives across the UAE and beyond for over two months now, many of us have spent an unprecedented amount of time indoors. One of the consequences of the imposed quarantine situation is that many people are no longer being exposed to direct sunlight for any prolonged period of time, leading to insufficient levels of Vitamin D in the body.

Vitamin D deficiency is already widely prevalent among the Emirati population and, due to the unique circumstances now in place, is likely to be even more widespread at the moment. While those suffering from a deficiency of the substance may not experience any severe symptoms right now, it can lead to serious health complications further down the line, which is why medical professionals advise taking supplements to ensure everyone has enough of the important vitamin in their body.

## Emiratis at risk

According to a study undertaken by the Dubai Health Authority (DHA) in November 2017, [a staggering 85%](#) of the UAE population is suspected of suffering from Vitamin D deficiency. This is likely due to the intense heat experienced almost year-round in the country, which makes spending prolonged periods of time in the sun nigh-on impossible.

Doctors recommend that at least two-thirds of the human body should be exposed to sunlight for around two to three hours per day in order to ensure there are sufficient levels of Vitamin D in our system. That's an unappetising prospect in the UAE at the best of times, but during lockdown it has become out of the question altogether.

## A gateway to other illnesses

Although Vitamin D deficiency may not present obvious symptoms immediately, it can develop into serious health conditions if not treated properly. Among other ailments, it can cause joint pain, back pain and a softening of the bones (known as osteoporosis or osteomalacia). It can also enhance the likelihood of contracting both type 1 and type 2 diabetes.

Meanwhile, there are certain links between both Vitamin D deficiency and coronavirus and [type 2 diabetes and COVID-19](#). That's because the immune system is the first line of defence against the disease, and if that system becomes



compromised (either due to insufficient levels of Vitamin D or imbalanced blood glucose levels), there is a greater chance of catching the virus.

## **How to get your fix**

Fortunately, there are ways to absorb adequate amounts of Vitamin D, even if venturing out into the sunlight is not possible. Supplements are the most reliable method of ensuring you maintain healthy levels of the substance, with a dosage of at least 10µg recommended by health professionals. Between 20µg and 50µg is deemed healthy, while anything beneath 10µg indicates a deficiency of the substance.

Vitamin D is also found in some foodstuffs, including dairy, egg yolks, oily fish (like herring, mackerel, salmon, swordfish and tuna) and red meat. However, it is only concentrated in these foods in small amounts, so it's advisable to take a supplement in order to ensure you're getting the appropriate amount of Vitamin D to prevent illness or disease.