



Vitamin D deficiency and heart disease

Consumers should ensure they get enough vitamin D, for more reason than one. Vitamin D deficiency is common in Ireland and is needed for healthy bone development. It helps our body use calcium to build strong bones.

Research carried out at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) and Beaumont Hospital found that a lack of vitamin D is also linked to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease. However, this does not mean taking vitamin D supplements has a role to play in the prevention of heart disease. The research published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* concluded that further research on this is needed.

Given that many Irish people have low vitamin D intake the research reinforces that fact that we should try and get a bit more sunshine outside of winter months. Ultraviolet light from the sun is essential for the manufacture of vitamin D in the body, and we have low levels of exposure to it in winter.

The recommended daily allowance for vitamin D is 0ug to 10ug per day, depending on how much sunlight you obtain. Good sources are salmon, tuna, mackerel and fish liver oils. Other sources are beef, liver, cheese, egg yolks and fortified foods, such as milk and breakfast cereals.