

Talking to your GP or healthcare professional about vitamin D

Vitamin D plays an important role in the Overcoming MS Program and is supported by a growing body of evidence demonstrating a protective role for people living with multiple sclerosis (MS) and in MS prevention.

This guide is designed to help you talk confidently with your family doctor, neurologist or other healthcare professionals about vitamin D. It will help you share evidence, and request appropriate monitoring and support.

This resource is intended for general guidance and does not replace medical advice. Always consult a qualified healthcare professional before making changes to your supplement routine.

1. Be clear and prepared



Before your appointment:

- Note down why vitamin D matters to you and how it fits into your lifestyle changes
- You could email some of the evidence to your doctor in advance
- Bring a summary of key studies or recommendations (see below)
- Write down any questions you want to ask, such as: "Can I have my vitamin D levels tested regularly?"

2. Present the evidence



You don't need to be a scientist to talk about science. Keep it simple.

- Explain that vitamin D is part of an evidence-based approach many people with MS choose to follow
- It is recommended by many MS Healthcare Professionals (HCPs)
- Mention the Overcoming MS Program is informed by peer-reviewed research.

Share brief summaries of key studies or expert recommendations:

- A healthy blood serum vitamin D level is thought to be between 100-150 nmol/L, although much higher levels are known to be safe for the majority of people
- A systematic review published in 2021 concluded that, when weighing up all of the available scientific evidence, moderate doses of vitamin D supplementation seem integral to the prevention and management of multiple sclerosis
- A 2018 review in the journal *Neurology* highlights a correlation between low vitamin D levels and increased relapse rates in MS
- A 2022 study in *Frontiers in Neurology* found that higher serum levels of vitamin D were associated with reduced MS disease activity and fewer new brain lesions.
- The UK NICE guidelines recognise vitamin D deficiency as common in people with MS.

At the end of this document we've created a 'print and take to your appointment' page including this key evidence.

You can also read more here <https://overcomingms.org/program/sunlight-vitamin-d>

3. Ask for a serum vitamin D test



Routine monitoring helps you make informed choices. You might say:

- "I've read evidence that maintaining a healthy vitamin D level is important for people living with MS. Could we test my current level and set up regular monitoring?"
- "I'd like to ensure I'm supplementing safely and effectively."
- Your GP can order a blood test to measure serum 25(OH)D levels, which is the standard indicator for vitamin D status.

4. Discuss supplementation



If you're taking vitamin D supplements:

- Share the dosage you're currently taking.
- Ask whether this is appropriate for your health needs.
- Ensure your healthcare professional is aware of any other medications or supplements you're using.
- Some people with MS choose higher-dose vitamin D supplements – this should always be monitored to avoid toxicity.

5. Be confident and collaborative



- Remember, this is about your health. Most healthcare professionals will appreciate that you're informed and proactive.
- Approach the conversation as a partnership.
- Be open to their concerns or questions.
- Let them know you value their input as you manage your MS with a holistic approach.

6. Helpful phrases you can use



- "I've been reading about the role of vitamin D in MS and I'd like to talk more about it."
- "Can we check my levels so I can make sure I'm supplementing appropriately?"
- "I'm following the evidence based Overcoming MS Program and vitamin D is a key part of that."

Print and take to your appointment

Why it matters

Vitamin D is thought to play a protective role in MS. Many people with MS aim to maintain optimal levels as part of an evidence-based lifestyle approach.

Questions

- Can I have my vitamin D (25(OH)D) levels tested?
- What is my current serum level?
- What dosage of vitamin D is appropriate for me?
- Can we set up regular monitoring?

Sharable evidence (links or scan QR codes)

- A healthy vitamin D level is thought to be between 100–150 nmol/L ([Smolders 2019](#))
- There is no single agreed-upon dose, but general recommendations include:
 - 4,000 units per day is a common recommendation from UK neurologists ([Dobson R 2018](#))
 - 6,000–10,000 units per day may be needed to keep vitamin D levels in the optimal range ([Gandhi, 2021](#))
- A systematic review published in 2021 concluded that, when weighing up all of the available scientific evidence, moderate doses of vitamin D supplementation seem integral to the prevention and management of multiple sclerosis. ([Gandhi, 2021](#))
- A 2018 Neurology review found low vitamin D levels are associated with higher relapse rates in MS. ([Sintzel, 2018](#))
- A 2022 Frontiers in Neurology study linked higher vitamin D levels to fewer new brain lesions. ([Orton, 2022](#))
- The UK National Institute for Health and Care Excellence ([NICE](#)) recognises vitamin D deficiency as a modifiable risk factor for multiple sclerosis (MS)



For Healthcare Professionals

You can find out more by looking at the pages we've prepared for health care professionals.

Visit our website on www.overcomingms.org

