

## WHAT? Vitamin D



**WHY?** Vitamin D [deficiency is common](#) in the UK. In the body, Vitamin D has a crucial role in [promoting the production of proteins](#) that protect the body from unwanted microorganisms. In addition, it plays an important role in muscle and bone function.

**HOW?** It is worthwhile getting tested by your GP to find out what your individual Vitamin D levels are. Oral supplementation of 5,000-10,000IU/day may be prescribed if vitamin D levels are insufficient, with a 2500IU/day maintenance dose recommended thereafter (especially during the winter months) .

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## WHAT? Fish Oils/ Omega-3 Fatty Acids

**WHY?** Omega-3 fatty acids [reduce inflammation within the body](#), which can be caused by exercise or daily stressors. Some evidence suggests that they may also [aid your body's response to illness](#).

**HOW?** The need for supplementation does depend on how much omega 3 fatty acids you already get from your natural diet e.g. from eating oily fish. For those that do not consume 3-4 portions of [oily](#) fish per week, supplementing with 300-1800mg/day is recommended.

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## WHAT? Zinc



**WHY?** Zinc can help [reduce the severity and duration of colds and flus](#) within 24 hours of supplementation, and reduces the likelihood of contracting illnesses when supplemented for at least 5 months.

**HOW?** Oral supplementation of 15mg/day.

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## WHAT? Probiotics

**WHY?** Some studies have shown that including probiotics in your diet can [enhance your gut bacteria and immune function](#), in-turn decreasing the likelihood of infections. Probiotic supplementation can also [reduce the risk of travellers' diarrhoea](#) in adults, and therefore may be useful when travelling to locations where food hygiene is poor and risk of illness is increased. In a clinical setting, if you've had a course of antibiotics, it may be beneficial to supplement with Probiotics to promote the colonisation of the gut with good bacteria that are killed by antibiotics.

**HOW?** Food sources include kefir, yoghurt and Yakult. A 14-day supplementation period is recommended prior to travelling to locations where hygiene is poor.



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## WHAT? Vitamin C



**WHY?** Vitamin C is an antioxidant that [reduces the effect of stressors](#), such as exercise, on the body. It may also help to [protect against common infections](#) and reduce the duration of common cold symptoms.

**HOW?** 200-1000mg/day. Avoid supplementing with vitamin C directly around training as this has the potential to [blunt training adaptations](#).

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Discover the dietary strategies that might also benefit your immune system by downloading our [Eating for Immunity](#) resource.