

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Herts and West Essex Provision of Vitamin D supplementation (Vitamin D liquid drops) to care home residents

1. Who has provided the Vitamin D liquid drops?

The Department of Health and Social Care are providing a free 4-month supply of daily Vitamin D liquid drops for residents in residential and nursing care homes in England.

2. Why are Vitamin D liquid drops being supplied to care homes?

To support care home residents general health as it is likely that care home residents will have stayed indoors more than usual over spring and summer last year as a result of the national restrictions for COVID-19.

3. What is the recommended daily dose of Vitamin D?

Vitamin D supplements will be supplied to care homes as a liquid supplement (Vitamin D liquid drops). Dosage per resident, per day is 2 drops. Two drops provides 10 micrograms or 400 international units (IU) vitamin D.

4. Are the Vitamin D liquid drops suitable for every resident?

No, the Vitamin D liquid drops are not suitable for residents who have certain medical conditions, are taking prescribed medication containing Vitamin D or are allergic to any ingredient within the product. [See here](#) for further guidance.

5. Should care home staff notify the GP of all residents who were already taking a Vitamin D supplement before the Vitamin D liquid drops arrived?

It is not a requirement of the government guidance to inform the GP. However, residents already taking a Vitamin D supplement should not take the Vitamin D liquid drops as well. We would suggest sharing the list of residents who were already taking a Vitamin D supplement with the GP at their next planned visit/virtual visit.

6. The Government advice says some other medications can contain Vitamin D – how will I know which medications do?

Discuss this with the GP or Primary Care Network multi-disciplinary team at their next planned visit/virtual visit.

- 7. Will each resident have their own supply of Vitamin D liquid drops?**
Yes, we would recommend recording the name of each resident on the packaging (ideally the bottle) of their individual supply. The timing of the supplement will vary from person to person and care home providers must comply with the instructions set out on the product label.
- 8. Where should the Vitamin D liquid drops be stored?**
The Vitamin D liquid drops should be stored securely where only authorised staff can access them. There may be some residents who are able and competent to self-administer their own Vitamin D liquid drops. If a resident is self-administering, you should be a risk assessment in place including safe storage.
- 9. What should we do once the bottle has been opened?**
Write the date opened on the bottle label as the Vitamin D liquid drops need to be used within 5 months.
- 10. What should we do with any spare bottles of the Vitamin D liquid drops?**
As the Vitamin D liquid drops have not been prescribed for an individual patient, we would advise keeping the spare supply sealed and stored securely. The spare supply could be used for any new admissions to the care home or as an additional 4 month supply to existing residents, but ensure the expiry date is checked before use.
- 11. Can I add the Vitamin D liquid drops to food or drink?**
Care staff must only administer the Vitamin D liquid drops to people when they have agreed to take it or an individual best interest decision has been made. The product label advises the Vitamin D liquid drops can be added to food and drink. To ensure the full dose is consumed, we would suggest mixing the Vitamin D liquid drops with one small spoonful of food or a very small volume of fluid. If a resident has a thickener prescribed, speak to a healthcare professional for advice before using.
- 12. What should we do if a resident lacks capacity to make a decision about taking Vitamin D liquid drops at this time?**
Staff should work with healthcare professionals to make an individual best interests decision for any resident who lacks capacity to make this decision at this time.

13. What happens at the end of the free 4 month supply of Vitamin D liquid drops?

Any further supply of 10mcg/400 IU vitamin D supplements including Vitamin D liquid drops for residents should be provided by care homes and **will not be provided by the NHS**. This is in line with regulation 14 (Part A) of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 which states that “The nutritional and hydration needs of service users must be met”. In addition to provision of nutritious meals, this includes [providing food supplements such as vitamin D where necessary](#).

14. Will the GP prescribe further doses of Vitamin D supplements such as Vitamin D liquid drops?

No. GPs should not be asked to prescribe on-going 10 microgram (400 IU) doses of Vitamin D. GPs can continue to prescribe higher doses of Vitamin D where required to treat deficiency.

15. If a resident is fed via tube, should we offer the Vitamin D liquid drops?

Vitamin D is included in to the majority of tube feeds and oral nutrition supplements. The amount of Vitamin D will vary according to the product used and the tube feeding regime advised by the dietitian. Before offering the Vitamin D liquid drops, check with the managing dietitian as the current feeding regime may already provide at least 10 micrograms (400 international units).

16. Are the Vitamin D liquid drops suitable for a resident who is a vegetarian?

The Vitamin D liquid drops are suitable for vegetarian and halal diets.

Please note: The FAQ will be updated as and when more information becomes available. The information provided is general advice and where relevant, continue to refer to your local care home policy.

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