

MID AND SOUTH ESSEX MEDICINES OPTIMISATION COMMITTEE (MSEMOC)

Guidance for care homes on the use of Vitamin D supplements obtained by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) free four-month provision scheme

Many people have been indoors more than usual this year and so might not have been making enough vitamin D from sunlight.

Vitamin D supplements are available to purchase in pharmacies, health food shops and supermarkets. It is expected that patients will purchase such supplements if still required following the four-month Government provision. Community pharmacists or other healthcare professionals are able to advise on suitable vitamin D products.

These vitamin D supplements should be managed in the same way as other medicines that residents bring to the care home with them, such as other vitamins and herbal remedies that have been purchased by the resident's family or next of kin. This is detailed in the CQC guidance on over the counter and homely remedies (<https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/adult-social-care/over-counter-medicines-homely-remedies>).

In all cases, the medicine should be assessed to ensure that it is suitable for the resident to take. This includes ensuring the vitamin D is in date, and that the patient can safely swallow the tablets. Other medicines can interfere with the vitamin D supplement. If the resident is taking digoxin they should not take the vitamin D supplement. If the resident is taking indigestion remedies containing magnesium they should stop taking the magnesium indigestion remedy whilst taking vitamin D. If the resident is taking water tablets (diuretics) you should inform the GP that they are taking vitamin D as they will need their blood calcium levels to be monitored.

Residents should not take the additional vitamin D supplements if any of the following applies:

- The resident is already taking, or is prescribed, a vitamin D supplement by their GP or healthcare professional. If the GP has recommended that they take a different amount of vitamin D, they should follow the GP's advice.
- The resident is under the age of 18
- The resident is taking digoxin as stated above
- The resident has a medical condition or treatment that means they have high calcium or vitamin D levels, for example kidney stones (now or in the past), too much parathyroid hormone (hyperparathyroidism), cancer (some cancers can lead to high calcium levels), severe kidney disease and a rare illness called sarcoidosis.
- The resident is currently being managed by a hospital renal, endocrinology, or cancer specialist

The care home may seek advice from a healthcare professional such as a nurse (in a nursing home), or the community pharmacist supplying medicines to the care home. Advice about the appropriateness of vitamin D for a particular resident can also be sought at the next routine MDT meeting with the GP. **It is not urgent that the resident starts taking the vitamin D as soon as it is received and so the first dose can wait until the next routine MDT or until you have consulted with the community pharmacist.**

Vitamin D should be documented on the residents Medication Administration Record (MAR) chart in line with policy, to ensure that doses taken are recorded. The process for documenting on the MAR chart in the care home should be the same as for other medicines residents take which are not prescribed, such as other vitamins, herbal remedies, and creams and lotions brought in by the resident's family or next of kin.

The vitamin D is not for general use and should be stored according to the manufacturer's guidance, as individual property of each resident taking it.

References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CQC Guideline: Over the counter medicines and homely remedies (https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/adult-social-care/over-counter-medicines-homely-remedies) • NHS Herts Valley CCG guidance: Good Practice Guidance: Prescribing Over-The-Counter Medication to Individuals in Receipt of Social Care, Reviewed July 2019. (https://hertsvalleysccg.nhs.uk/application/files/1915/6570/5201/Good_Practice_Guidance_prescribing_over_the_counter_medication_to_individuals_in_receipt_of_social_care_v2.0_July_2019.pdf) • Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) Guidance: Vitamin D supplements: how to take them safely https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vitamin-d-supplements-how-to-take-them-safely/vitamin-d-supplements-how-to-take-them-safely • NHS Guidance: Get vitamin D supplements if you're at high risk from coronavirus (COVID-19) https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/get-vitamin-d-supplements/ • Colecalciferol 800IU Patient Information Leaflet, Consilient Health Ltd. Revised December 2018. https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/files/pil.2382.pdf
Acknowledgements	Mid and South Essex CCGs Medicines Management Teams
Version	1.0
Author	HCPMSEMOC working group
Approved by	MSEMOC; MSE Joint Committee
Date Approved	December 2020
Review Date	December 2025 or sooner if subject to any new updates nationally