



# Vitamin D Omnibus

Summary of research results

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ScotPulse

In association with



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## Introduction

This research provides an insight into consumer knowledge and understanding of vitamin D supplement advice in Scotland. The online survey was sent to a sample of the ScotPulse panel representative of the adult population throughout Scotland. A total of 1465 completed responses were received. Results were weighted to reflect the demographic profile of the Scottish adult population.

Fieldwork was carried out 18<sup>th</sup>- 20<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

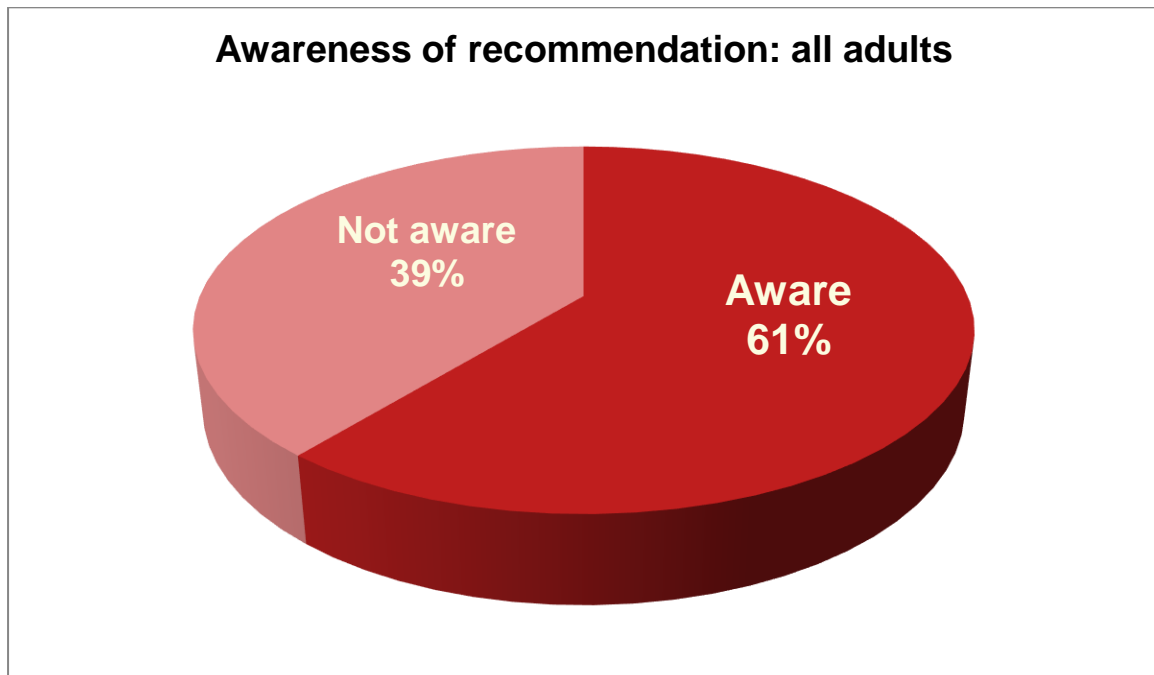
## Key findings

- 39% of adults are unaware of the recommendation to take a daily vitamin D supplement during the winter months.
  - Awareness increases with age – 7 out of 10 aged over 65 are aware of the daily dose recommendation, compared to just half (51%) of those aged under 35.
- 58% of adults say they never take a vitamin D supplement.
- 31% of total respondents take a daily vitamin D supplement – they are more likely to be older. 45% those who were aware of the advice said they take a supplement.
- Although daily vitamin D supplement usage increases in line with awareness of the recommendation, almost 2 in 5 who are aware of the recommendation to take a daily dose, do not do so.
- The top reason given (by those who said they do not take a supplement daily) for not taking a vitamin D supplement was being unaware of the recommendation, followed by a preference to get vitamins from food.
- Four out of five (80%) said they were unaware of the amount of vitamin D recommended as a daily dose.
- Just over a quarter (27%) of the 20% who did give an answer about the dosage level said 10 micrograms (or 400 international units) – so just over 5% of the whole sample could correctly identify the recommended daily dose.
- Having provided a short explanation on the advice on vitamin D. supplements, almost 2 out of 3 (64%) said that they would be likely or very likely to take a daily dose of vitamin D.

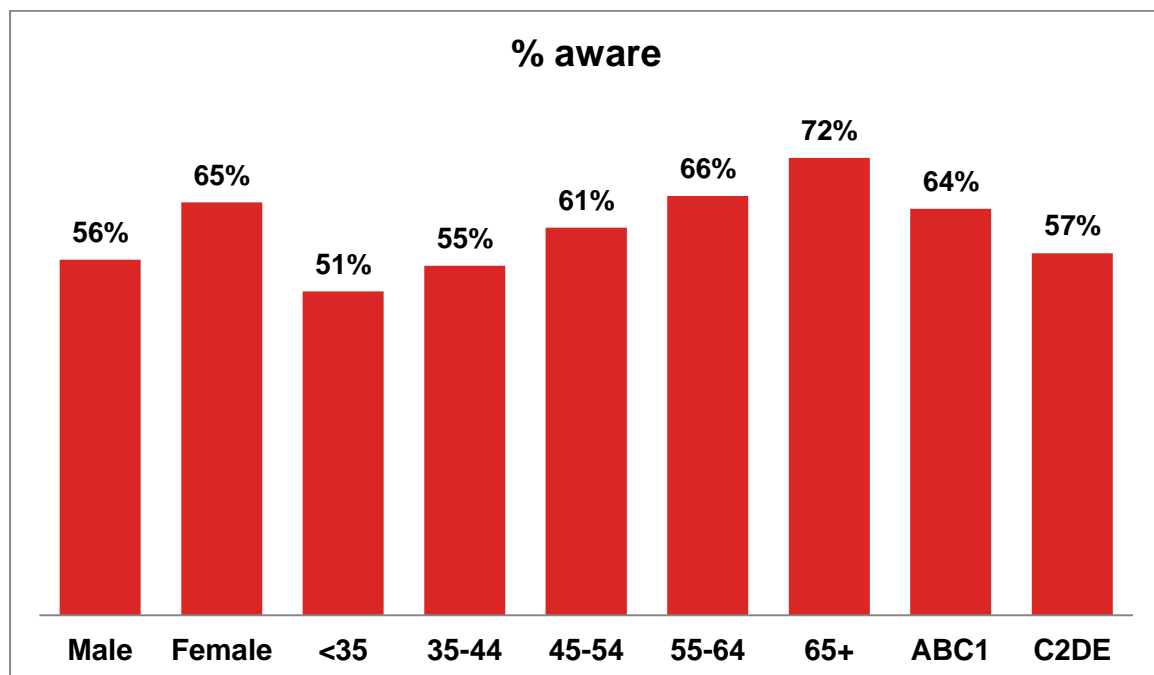
## Awareness

**Q: Are you aware of the recommendation to consider taking a daily vitamin D supplement between October and March each year?**

6 out of 10 respondents (61%) were aware of this recommendation. Females were more likely to be aware than males, and awareness increased with age – just half (51%) of those aged under 35 were aware compared to over 70% of respondents aged 65+. Awareness of the recommendation was +7% higher amongst those in ABC1 socio-economic groups compared with those in C2DE groups.

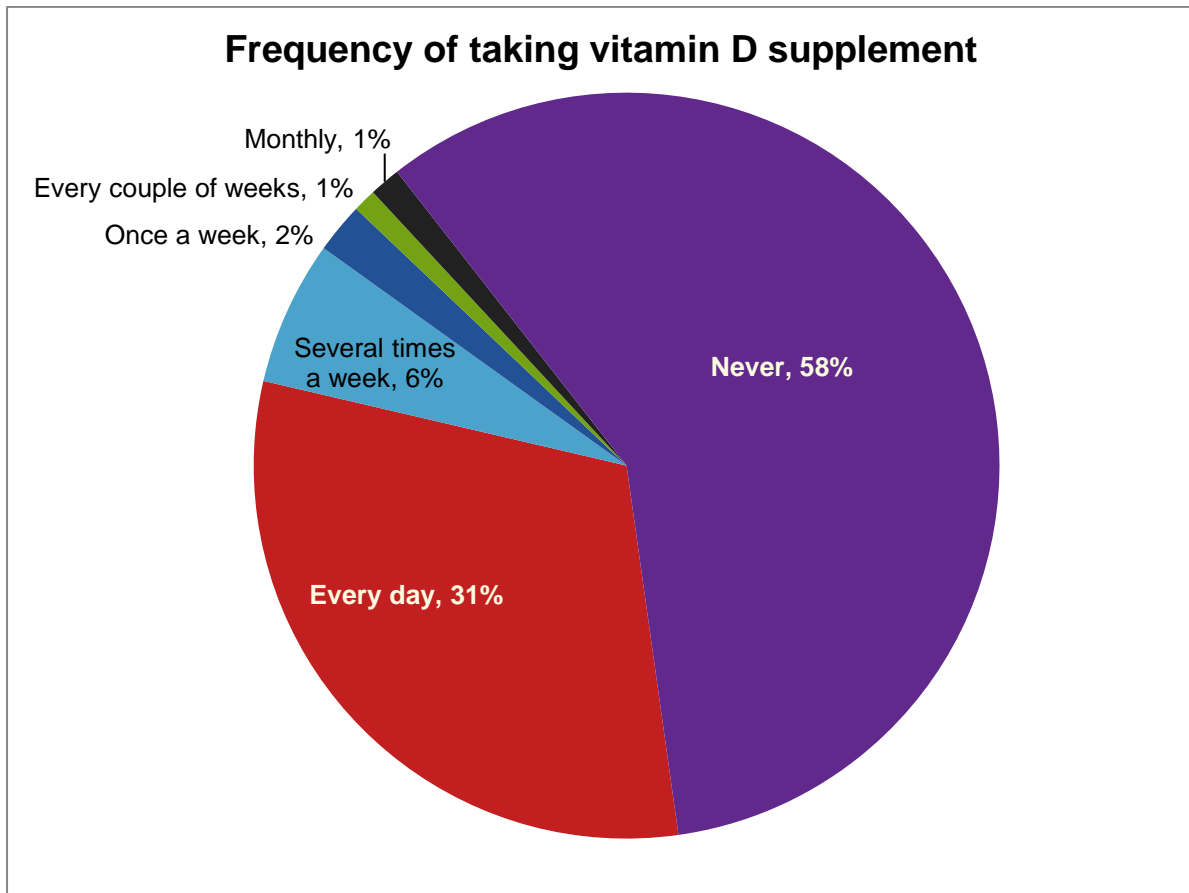


Awareness by demographics



## Frequency of Usage

Q: How often, if at all, do you take a vitamin D supplement?



Over half (58%) say they never take a vitamin D supplement.

Those who do take vitamin D supplements tend to do so regularly, with almost one in three (31%) saying they take a daily dose.

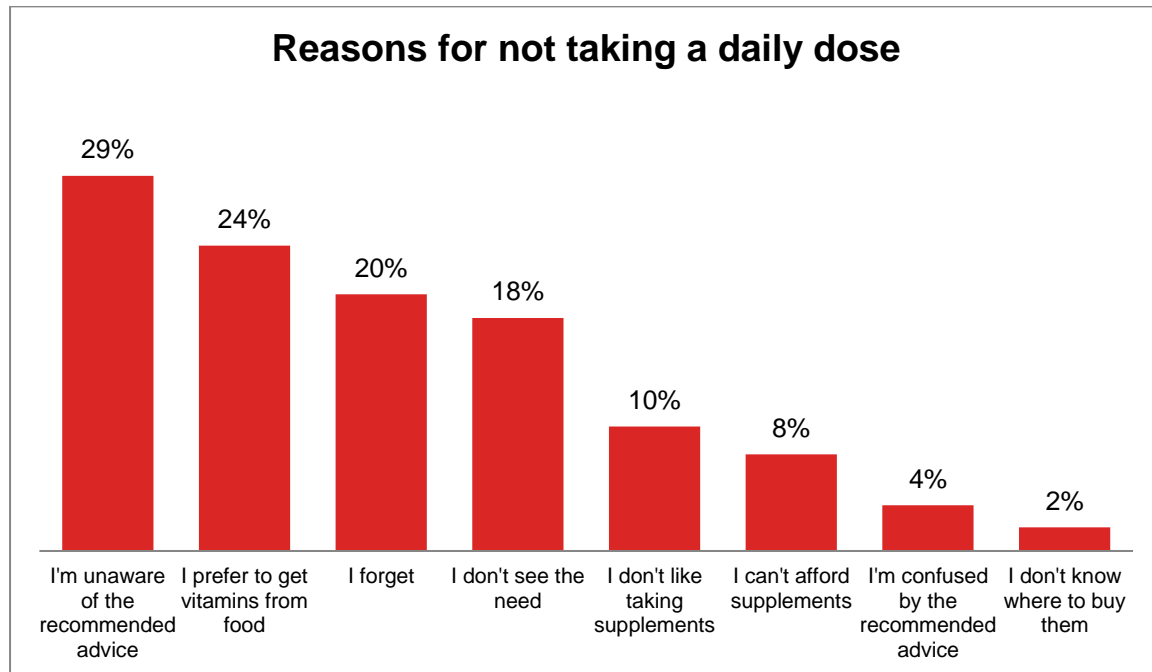
Daily users are more likely to be older, and to be aware of the recommendation to take a vitamin D supplement. However, almost 2 in 5 (39%) of those who are aware of the recommendation say they never take a vitamin D supplement.

45% those who were aware of the advice said they take a supplement.

## Barriers

Respondents who do not take a daily dose of vitamin D were asked:

Why don't you take a daily vitamin D supplement?



The main reason given was not being aware of the recommended advice, mentioned by 29% of respondents.

A quarter (24%) said they preferred to get their vitamins from food, a fifth (20%) simply forget to take the supplement and a similar proportion (18%) don't believe it is necessary.

Other reasons given were wide and varied ranging from: 'redheads don't need to take'; a belief it was not required due to working outside; those who were already taking a multivitamin supplement; those who felt they were getting enough vitamin D from holidays or sunbed use; and some who mentioned having an adverse reaction.

Older people (65+) who don't take a daily dose are more likely to say that they prefer to get vitamins from food (28%).

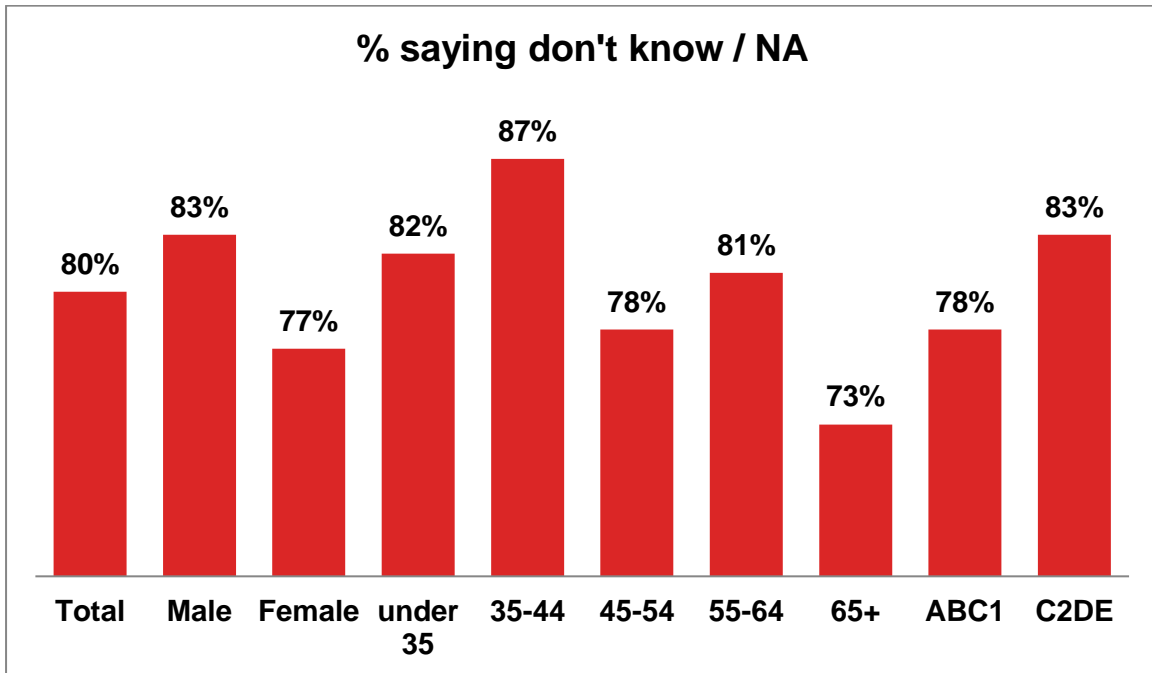
One in three of those who are aware of the advice said that they forget.

## Dosage

All respondents were asked an open question:

**How many micrograms of vitamin D should you take as a daily supplement?**

4 out of 5 respondents said that they didn't know. Of the 20% who did give an answer, 27% said 10 micrograms (or 400 international units). Answers ranged from 2 to 40,000.



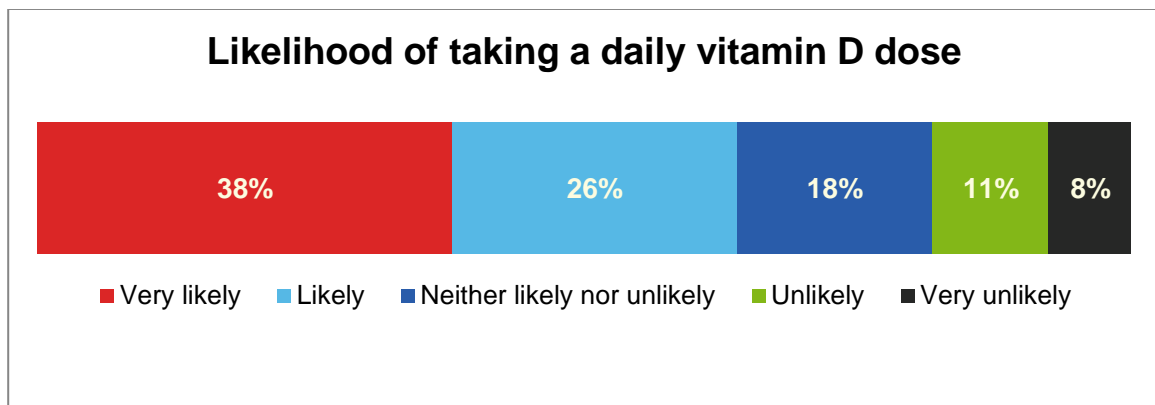
7 out of 10 of those who are aware of the recommendation are unaware of the recommended dose, and over half (55%) of those who take a daily dose don't know how much the recommendation is.

## Respondents were then given the following short explanation:

In Scotland we only get enough of the right kind of sunlight for our bodies to make vitamin D between April and September, mostly between 11am and 3pm. Taking a daily 10 microgram vitamin D supplement, particularly between October and March, supports bone and muscle health and reduces our risk of vitamin D deficiency.

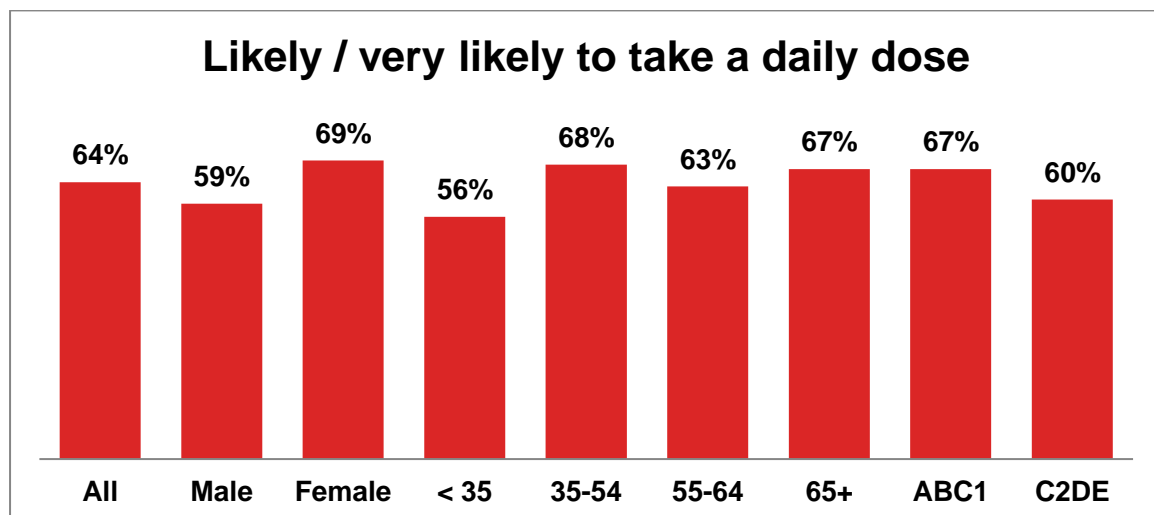
## Likelihood of uptake

Knowing these benefits now, how likely are you to consider taking a daily 10 microgram vitamin D supplement between October and March?



Almost 2 out of 3 (64%) having seen the explanation said that they would be likely or very likely to take a daily dose of vitamin D. 1 in 5 (19%) said that they were unlikely to do so.

44% of those who currently never take a vitamin D supplement said that they would be likely to take a daily dose.



## Appendix

### Sample details

Unweighted	count	%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1466</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Male</b>	602	41%
<b>Female</b>	864	59%
<b>Age bands</b>		
<b>under 35</b>	173	12%
<b>35-44</b>	166	11%
<b>45-54</b>	279	19%
<b>55-64</b>	428	29%
<b>65+</b>	420	29%
<b>Household</b>		
<b>1 person</b>	266	18%
<b>2 person</b>	690	47%
<b>3 person</b>	270	18%
<b>4+ person</b>	240	16%
<b>presence of children</b>		
<b>No children</b>	1214	83%
<b>With children</b>	252	17%
<b>social grade</b>		
<b>ABC1</b>	838	57%
<b>C2DE</b>	628	43%
<b>Area</b>		
<b>W Central</b>	589	40%
<b>E Central</b>	417	29%
<b>North</b>	454	31%

Results have been weighted to reflect the Scottish adult population by gender and age



## Questions

1. Are you aware of the recommendation to consider taking a daily vitamin D supplement between October and March each year?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

2. How often, if at all, do you take a vitamin D supplement?

- Every day (1)
- Several times a week (2)
- Once a week (3)
- Every couple of weeks (4)
- Monthly (5)
- Never (6)

*if q2 is not 'every day' ask q3*

[Answer list order=Randomize]

3. Why don't you take a daily vitamin D supplement?

*Please select all that apply*

- I'm unaware of the recommended advice (1)
- I'm confused by the recommended advice (2)
- I don't see the need (3)
- I forget (4)
- I prefer to get vitamins from food (5)
- I can't afford supplements (6)
- I don't know where to buy them (7)
- I don't like taking supplements (8)
- Other, please state (9)\_\_\_\_\_ [Keep position ♦ Other]

4. How many micrograms of vitamin D should you take as a daily supplement?

- No of micrograms of vitamin D (please type a number) (1)\_\_\_\_\_ [Keep position ♦ Other]
- Don't know (2)

5. In Scotland we only get enough of the right kind of sunlight for our bodies to make vitamin D between April and September, mostly between 11am and 3pm. Taking a daily 10 microgram vitamin D supplement, particularly between October and March, supports bone and muscle health and reduces our risk of vitamin D deficiency.

Knowing these benefits now, how likely are you to consider taking a daily 10 microgram vitamin D supplement between October and March?

- Very likely (1)
- Likely (2)
- Neither likely nor unlikely (3)
- Unlikely (4)
- Very unlikely (5)