

Response from Birmingham Vitamin D Steering Group to SACN consultation on Vitamin D

September 2015

1. We agree with the emphasis on musculoskeletal outcomes of Vitamin D as evidence of extra-skeletal benefits is currently lacking sufficient evidence.
2. We welcome the acknowledgment that sunlight is inadequate to maintain adequate vitamin D levels.
3. The RNI of 10 µg/d proposed for the UK population aged 4 and over includes individuals from minority ethnic groups with darker skin – it gives a consistent, simple message for both professionals and individuals, which is helpful.
4. We welcome the recommendation that exclusively breast fed infants should achieve the same RNI as non breast fed infants
5. We would like to point out that the use of the new term “safe intake” used for those aged under 4 years may cause alarm and confusion- intakes far above 10µg have been shown to be “safe”, and there is already a “Safe Upper Limit” for vitamin D.
6. “Safe intake” seems to mean “safe” in the sense of “sufficient to prevent deficiency”. We therefore suggest that it be called “sufficient intake” instead.
7. Given that babies taking large volumes of formula would exceed the 8.5 -100 µg/d, by up to 40%, we feel it needs further clarification that this does not constitute a risk and, by extrapolation, that our local policy that Vitamin D supplements should start from soon after birth rather than at 6 months is also safe.
8. We welcome the recommendation to look at a strategic approach as to how to achieve the RNI of 10 µg/d and urge that universal supplementation continues to be recommended during pregnancy
9. We note with concern that no recommendations are made on how these recommendations are implemented in practice, which may lead to inaction, or delays in policy change, particularly with reference to the age, or volume of formula intake, at which supplements should be introduced in babies.
10. Given the number of cases of hypocalcaemic fits in infants aged less than 6 months, many of which are receiving formula milk, we urge the committee to give consideration to making clear recommendations about vitamin supplements starting soon after birth