

Remember

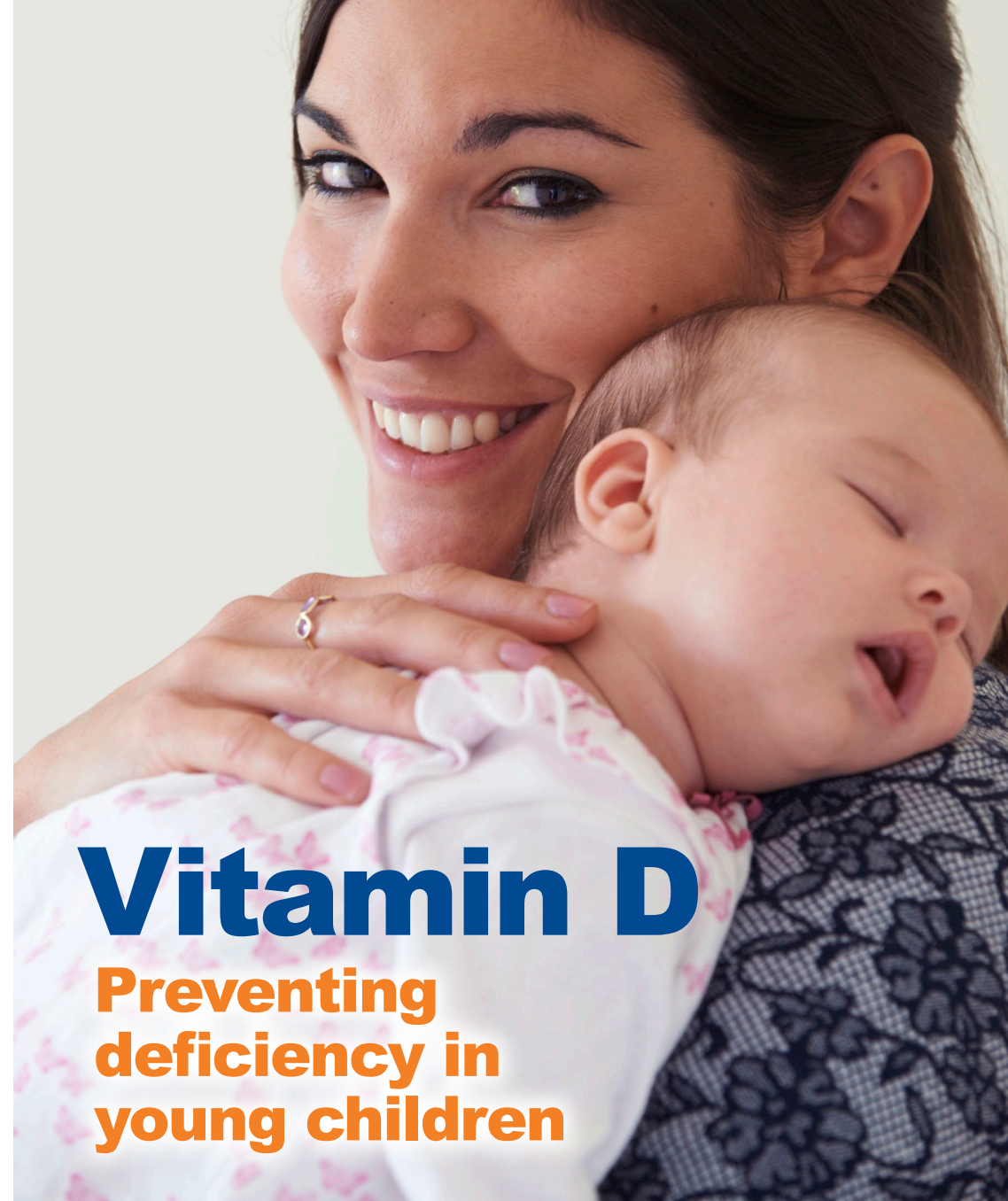
- Give your child Healthy Start vitamin drops daily
- Let your child enjoy being outside in the sun, without sunscreen for 15-20 minutes daily. Never let them redden or burn.
- Offer your child foods rich in vitamin D regularly

For more information on the Healthy Start Scheme and vitamin drops, visit

www.healthystart.nhs.uk or
call the helpline on **0345 607 6823**

Written by the Bradford Nutrition and Dietetics Service which is located within the Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

The wording in this publication can be made available in other formats such as large print and Braille. Please call 01274 432020.



Vitamin D

Preventing deficiency in young children

NHS

Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven Clinical Commissioning Group
Bradford City Clinical Commissioning Group
Bradford Districts Clinical Commissioning Group

City of Bradford MDC

www.bradford.gov.uk

Vitamin D is needed to absorb calcium from the diet. Vitamin D helps to keep bones and teeth strong and healthy. It is Bradford policy to supplement **ALL** infants with **FREE** Healthy Start vitamin drops from birth up to 6 months of age.

The Department of Health recommends all children be given the vitamin drops till they are 5 years old.



Q What are the signs and symptoms of vitamin D deficiency?

- A
- Bone pain
 - Muscle weakness and cramps
 - Poor growth
 - Bone deformities in extreme cases

Q Who is at risk of vitamin D deficiency?

- A
- All babies and young children need vitamin D for growth and to stay healthy. However, some children are at a greater risk of developing deficiency because they:
- Are South Asian, African, African Caribbean or Middle Eastern
 - Have low exposure to sunlight on the skin
 - Have a poor or restrictive diet
 - Are babies and young children living in Bradford
 - Are a frequent sunscreen user

Q Where do we get vitamin D from?

- A
- We get most of our vitamin D from the action of sunlight on the skin. Only very little vitamin D is obtained from the diet. Going outside without sunscreen for 15-20 minutes every day in the summer months (April-September) should be enough to make enough vitamin D. However, children with darker skin need more time in the sun to make the same amount of vitamin D than children with fairer skin. It is important not to let the skin redden or burn. Babies under 6 months should not be exposed to direct sunlight.

Q Which foods are good sources of vitamin D?

- A
- Only very few foods contain vitamin D. These include:
- Oily fish (salmon, sardines, pilchards, trout etc.)
 - Breakfast cereals fortified with vitamin D
 - Eggs
 - Margarine
 - Evaporated milk (and some milk powders)

Healthy Start Vitamin Drops for Children

Once your child is 6 months old, your health visitor will signpost you to the Healthy Start Scheme. If eligible, you will continue getting **FREE** vitamin drops for your child until they are 4 years old. Some children, who are at a high risk of developing vitamin D deficiency will continue to receive the vitamin drops from their health visitor for free until they are 2 years old. For more information about the vitamin drops, speak to your health visitor. The Healthy Start vitamin drops can also be purchased from your health centre and local pharmacy for a small cost.

