

Preventing Vitamin A deficiency in Children

To prevent vitamin A deficiency for good health in young children:

- ❑ Babies less than six months should be exclusively breastfed. A mother's milk is rich in vitamin A.
- ❑ After 6 months of age, start introducing your baby to other vitamin A rich foods like dark green leafy vegetables as well as yellow and orange fruits and vegetables. Mashed, cooked green leaves, pumpkins, paw paw, mangoes, well-cooked liver, or any other vitamin A rich foods when available should be added to a child's porridge.
- ❑ Some fat or oil should also be added to a child's diet every day. This helps the body to make use of vitamin A.
- ❑ All children should be given plenty of vitamin A rich foods.
- ❑ All children from 6 months to 59 months should be given vitamin A capsules.

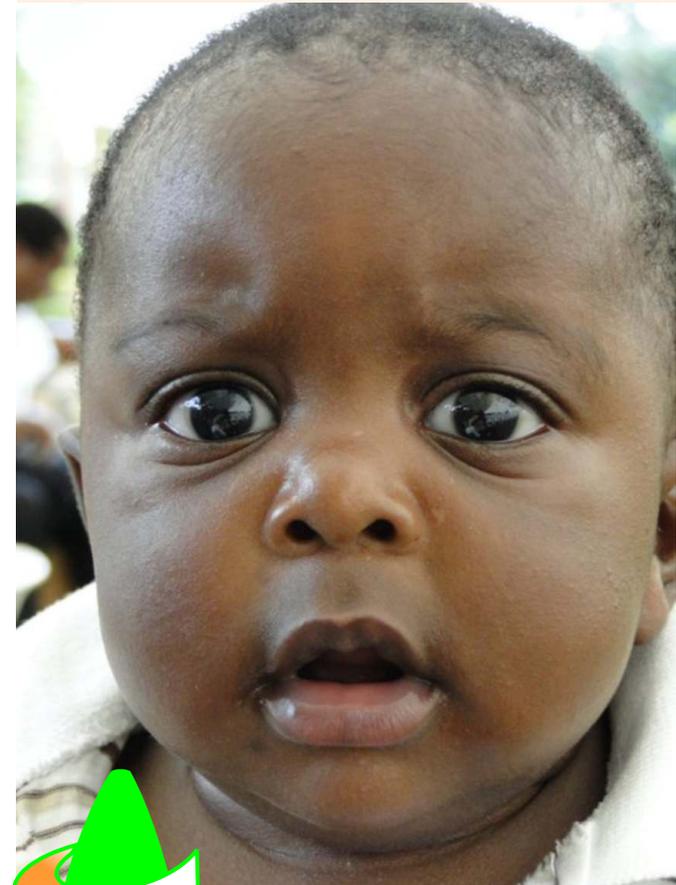


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What you need to know about Vitamin A



VITAMIN

FOR A HEALTHY BODY & GOOD EYESIGHT

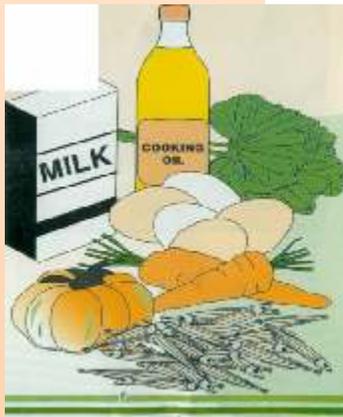
What is Vitamin A ?

Vitamin A is a substance required by the body in small amounts to promote good health.

Vitamin A rich foods

Vitamin A is found in green, orange and yellow fruits and vegetables and in animal foods. Examples of these foods include:

- ❑ Green leaves such as rape, pumpkin leaves, cassava leaves, bean leaves, sweet potato leaves.
- ❑ Orange and yellow fruits and vegetables like orange fleshed sweet potatoes, carrots, pumpkins, ripe mangoes and paw paws.
- ❑ Animal foods like liver, liver oils, kapenta and other small fish eaten whole are a good source of vitamin A.
- ❑ Other sources of vitamin A include eggs and milk, red palm oil, breast milk and fortified sugar.
- ❑ Foods containing



oil or fat such as groundnuts and Soya beans help the body to use Vitamin A. Therefore, use these as often as you can especially in vegetables.

Children need Vitamin A

- ❑ Children under 5 years of age and especially those within the first 1000 most critical days need plenty of Vitamin A.
- ❑ Children who are malnourished or have measles, diarrhea, or other serious infections are particularly in special need of Vitamin A as these conditions easily deplete the vitamin A in the body.

Vitamin A deficiency

- ❑ Although vitamin A is required in small amounts, it plays a very important role in promoting growth, protecting against diseases and for healthy eyes and skin.
- ❑ If a person does not eat enough of the foods that contain vitamin A, then a condition known as

vitamin A deficiency develops.

- ❑ A person with low stores of vitamin A in the body will not easily fight off diseases.
- ❑ Low stores of vitamin A in the body may lead to difficulty in seeing in dim light and to total blindness if not corrected in time.

Vitamin A capsules

- ❑ At times it may be difficult to eat enough foods to have sufficient vitamin A in our bodies. In this case it is possible to give vitamin a capsules.
- ❑ These capsules are given to children between the age of six months to five years every six months at the health centers.
- ❑ Vitamin A capsules are also given to children who have measles, severe diarrhea or who are malnourished.

