

Summary of USPSTF Draft Recommendation

Vitamin D, Calcium, or Combined Supplementation for the Primary Prevention of Falls and Fractures in Community Dwelling Adults

December 2024



What is this draft recommendation about?

Falls are a common problem among older adults and a leading cause of injury and death in this group. **Fractures**, or breaking a bone, can happen in people of all ages, but because they become more common as people get older, this recommendation focuses on older adults.

For this draft recommendation, the Task Force looked at whether taking vitamin D and calcium supplements can help to prevent falls and fractures. **Vitamin D** and **calcium** are two nutrients important to bone health. Vitamin D and calcium **supplements** are pills that provide additional amounts of these nutrients beyond what people get through diet or exposure to the sun.



What does the USPSTF recommend?



The USPSTF recommends against supplementation with vitamin D with or without calcium for the primary preventions of fractures in community-dwelling postmenopausal women and men age 60 years or older.



The USPSTF recommends against supplementation with vitamin D for the prevention of falls in community-dwelling postmenopausal women and men age 60 years or older.

So, what does that mean?

Older adults should not take vitamin D supplements, with or without calcium, to prevent falls or fractures.



Who is this draft recommendation for?

This recommendation applies to community-dwelling adults and includes women who have gone through menopause and men 60 years or older. “Community-dwelling” means living at home and not in assisted living, a nursing home, or other institutional care setting.

This recommendation is not for people who have been diagnosed with osteoporosis or vitamin D deficiency, or people who have a medical condition that affects how they absorb vitamin D. This focuses only on preventing falls and fractures in people who are not taking vitamin D or calcium for specific medical reasons.



Why is this draft recommendation and topic important?

- Preventing older adults from falling and breaking a bone is important to their health and independence.
- While vitamin D and calcium supplements do not prevent falls and fractures, both nutrients are important for overall health, and it is important that everyone get the recommended daily allowance of these nutrients.
- There are other proven ways for older adults to maintain good bone health and prevent falls and fractures, including getting [screened for osteoporosis](#). Older adults who live at home and who are more likely to fall can also benefit from [structured exercise programs to help prevent falls](#).
- Importantly, this recommendation is not for people who are taking vitamin D or calcium for other medical reasons like osteoporosis. Those individuals should follow guidance from their healthcare professionals on how to stay healthy.

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What are the benefits?

There is no benefit in taking vitamin D, with or without calcium, to prevent falls and fractures in older adults who are not taking these supplements for other specific medical reasons.



What are the harms?

The Task Force found evidence that taking vitamin D and calcium supplements increases the likelihood of developing kidney stones in some people.



Where can I learn more?

- Preventing Falls and Hip Fractures (CDC)
- Falls and Fractures in Older Adults: Causes and Prevention (NIH)
- STEADI - Older Adult Fall Prevention (CDC)
- Vitamin D Fact Sheet for Consumers (NIH)
- Calcium Fact Sheet for Consumers (NIH)



How can I comment?

Visit the USPSTF [website](#) to read the full draft recommendation and submit a comment.



The Task Force welcomes comments on this draft recommendation.



Comments must be received between December 17, 2024, and January 21, 2025.



All comments will be considered as the Task Force finalizes the recommendation.

Please note the public comment period has been expanded from the standard four weeks to five weeks to account for the holidays.