

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**DATE: 21 July 2016**

### **Scientific Committee on Nutrition and Health recommends daily vitamin D supplement in winter months**

Commenting on the report from the Scientific Committee on Nutrition and Health (SACN), which recommends an RNI (Reference Nutrient Intake) for vitamin D of 10 µg/d (400 IU/d) for the UK population aged 4 and above<sup>1</sup>, PAGB Chief Executive, John Smith, said:

“Vitamin D is important to support healthy bones, teeth and muscles. Our bodies make vitamin D from sunlight, but in the winter months the sun does not reach high enough in the sky to allow the correct wavelength of light through the atmosphere to stimulate the manufacture of vitamin D in our skin.

“While limited amounts of vitamin D are present in oily fish, red meat, eggs and fortified cereals, it is almost impossible to obtain increased the recommended levels from diet alone.

We are, therefore, delighted that Public Health England has responded by changing its advice and recommending all children and adults should take a vitamin D supplement during the autumn and winter months<sup>2</sup>, but would urge them to go further and, in line with the SACN report, recommend people take a supplement year round as a precautionary measure to cover population groups in the UK identified to be at risk of deficiency.

“People who avoid exposing their skin to sunlight, such as people who burn easily and cover up to go outside or are housebound, and Black or Asian people, whose skin needs more sunlight to produce vitamin D, run a much higher risk of deficiency and we fully endorse the recommendation that these people take a supplement throughout the year.

“Vitamin and mineral supplements make a positive contribution to our health and wellbeing. Not everyone is able to eat a properly healthy balanced diet every day, so we would encourage people to take a daily multi-vitamin, multi-mineral and fish oil to plug any nutrient gaps in their diet.

“Vitamin D supplements are readily available in pharmacies, health food stores and supermarkets and are not expensive. This is an important way in which people can self care and invest in their own health and wellbeing.”

**- ENDS -**

**Notes to editors:**

PAGB (Proprietary Association of Great Britain) is the UK trade association representing manufacturers of branded over-the-counter medicines, self care medical devices and food supplements.

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For expert comment on issues related to vitamins, minerals and other food supplements, please contact the Health Supplements Information Service (HSIS) [info@hsis.org](mailto:info@hsis.org), 020 7052 8850 or (out-of-hours) 07867 513361.

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References:

<sup>1</sup> SACN 2016, Vitamin D and Health <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sacn-vitamin-d-and-health-report> accessed 21 July 2016

<sup>2</sup> Public Health England <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/phe-publishes-new-advice-on-vitamin-d> accessed 21 July 2016