

# At-risk groups to receive free winter supply of vitamin D

- Deliveries will be made to clinically extremely vulnerable and care home residents
- Higher risk of vitamin D deficiency as these groups have spent more time indoors this year

More than 2.5 million vulnerable people across England will be offered free vitamin D supplements for the winter, the government has announced today (Saturday 28 November).

All care homes will automatically receive a provision for their residents, while individuals on the [clinically extremely vulnerable](#) list will receive a letter inviting them to opt in for a supply to be delivered directly to their homes. Deliveries will be free of charge, starting in January, and will provide 4 months' worth of supplements to last people through the winter months.

The supplements will support general health, in particular bone and muscle health. This is particularly important this year as these individuals are more likely to have been indoors for extended periods due to measures introduced to stop the spread of COVID-19.

Evidence of the link of vitamin D to COVID-19 is still being researched with larger scale trials needed. In the meantime, the Secretary of State has asked the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and Public Health England (PHE) to re-review the existing evidence. The government will publish its findings towards the end of the year.

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Matt Hancock said:

Because of the incredible sacrifices made by the British people to control the virus, many of us have spent more time indoors this year and could be deficient in vitamin D.

The government is taking action to ensure vulnerable individuals can access a free supply to last them through the darker winter months. This will support their general health, keep their bones and muscles healthy and crucially reduce the pressure on our NHS.

A number of studies indicate vitamin D might have a positive impact in protecting against COVID-19. I have asked NICE and PHE to re-review the existing evidence on the link between COVID-19 and vitamin D to ensure we explore every potential opportunity to beat this virus.

Dr Alison Tedstone, Chief Nutritionist at Public Health England, said:

Vitamin D is important for our bone and muscle health.

We advise that everyone, particularly the elderly, those who don't get outside and those with dark skin, takes a vitamin D supplement containing 10 micrograms (400IU) every day.

This year, the advice is more important than ever with more people spending more time inside, which is why the government will be helping the clinically extremely vulnerable to get vitamin D.

The advice from PHE is for everybody to take 10 micrograms (400 IU) of vitamin D a day between October and early March to keep bones and muscles healthy.

PHE advises people who are more at risk of not having enough vitamin D to take a vitamin D supplement all year round. A range of products and doses are available at supermarkets, pharmacies and other retailers.

Anyone who is able to purchase a vitamin D supplement and start taking them now is advised to do so, even if you are also eligible for a delivery later in the year.

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) will provide further information and guidance for all nursing and residential care home providers in the coming weeks.

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## **PM call with Irish Taoiseach: 27 November 2020**

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to Irish Taoiseach Micheál Martin this evening.



The Prime Minister spoke to Irish Taoiseach Micheál Martin this evening.

The leaders updated one another on their respective efforts to tackle coronavirus and the steps they have taken to ensure people in the UK and Ireland can enjoy Christmas as safely as possible.

They discussed shared challenges including the environment and committed to working together ahead of the UK-hosted COP26 summit next year.

They discussed the progress in the UK-EU trade negotiations and the Prime Minister underlined his commitment to reaching a deal that respects the sovereignty of the UK. The leaders also reaffirmed the need to prioritise the Good Friday Agreement and avoid a hard border on the island of Ireland.

The Prime Minister and Taoiseach looked forward to seeing one another in person when possible.

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## [Hammersmith Bridge Taskforce meeting, 27 November 2020](#)

News story

Joint statement on progress made by the taskforce at its meeting on 27 November 2020.



The eighth meeting of the Hammersmith Bridge Taskforce was held today, 27 November 2020.

It was chaired by Transport Minister, Baroness Vere. Attendees included the Project Director Dana Skelley plus representatives from the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, the Greater London Authority, Transport for London (TfL), and the Port of London

Authority.

Dana Skelley, speaking on behalf of the Hammersmith Bridge Taskforce, said:

The Taskforce held another productive meeting today. The Chair, Baroness Vere, noted the positive meeting with the Transport Secretary and Cllr Cowan, the leader of Hammersmith and Fulham Council, to discuss new proposals for the reopening of the bridge to both pedestrians and cyclists and motor vehicles. A further meeting on the temporary bridge proposals and funding is due to take place shortly.

Cllr Cowan updated the Taskforce on the new proposals from Delancey and Foster + Partners and discussed with the Taskforce how these might be incorporated into the current project plan.

Alongside DfT engineers and officials, I am continuing to provide project management support to assess and review all the proposals with the goal of enabling people to cross the river and move under the bridge as soon as possible.

The temporary ferry service is on track to be the most immediately available alternative river crossing for pedestrians and cyclists at Hammersmith Bridge.

The immediate mitigations work to the bridge's two western pedestals is underway and contractors will be onsite from next week.

The Taskforce agreed to meet again in a fortnight.

The Hammersmith Bridge Taskforce was set up by the Department for Transport in September 2020 to work towards safely reopening the Hammersmith Bridge. The taskforce is chaired by Baroness Vere and includes representatives from TfL, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, Network Rail, the Greater London Authority and the Port of London Authority.

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## [Young Food Ambassadors meet with Children's Minister](#)

Young Food Ambassadors have met with Children's Minister Vicky Ford to

discuss their role in promoting healthy eating and activities, following confirmation in the Spending Review of the Government's extended support for disadvantaged children.

The Minister and a group of seven of the Young Food Ambassadors for the Children's Right2Food Campaign were joined by their Ambassador Dame Emma Thompson and Food Foundation Executive Director Anna Taylor for a Zoom meeting on Thursday 26 November where they spoke about their shared ambition to tackle childhood obesity and improve access to nutritious meals for all children, especially those most disadvantaged.

It follows the Government's [announcement](#) of a £170m support package for the most vulnerable over winter and the expansion of the £220m Holiday Activities and Food programme to cover Easter, summer and Christmas in 2021. This was confirmed again by the Chancellor on Wednesday as part of the Spending Review settlement.

Children's Minister Vicky Ford said:

I'm so grateful for the energy and dedication shown by the Young Food Ambassadors, who have shared their experiences with me of school food and healthy eating.

We all agree on the importance of a healthy, nutritious meal and the impact it can have on children's development. Through our expanded Holiday Activities and Food programme, thousands more young people will benefit from this during the Easter, summer and Christmas breaks next year.

Executive Director of the Food Foundation Anna Taylor said:

Today we saw a high level of engagement from Minister Ford on the issues of child food insecurity and inequalities in obesity. Since our last meeting with the Minister in July, the Government has made significant commitments to tackling child food insecurity during the holidays, which we applaud.

It was clear today that the Minister understands the importance of engaging with young people living with food insecurity when considering these solutions. The Young Food Ambassadors look forward to collaborating further with the Minister on decisive action to ensure no child misses out on a healthy diet.

Minister Ford, who recently wrote to schools to encourage them to make every effort to provide hot meals that meet the School Food Standards, praised the work of school caterers for getting kitchens back up and running since September.

At least 99% of schools have been open each week since the start of term in

November, and schools, colleges and early years settings across the country have worked extremely hard to remain open.

The Minister spoke to the Young Ambassadors about their experiences of healthy eating at school and encouraged them to work with the Governments from across the four nations to promote this.

She also invited Dame Emma to visit a Holiday Activities and Food project next summer after the expanded programme has been rolled out across England.

Asha, 14 from Cumbria, one of the seven Young Food Ambassadors to meet with Minister Ford, said:

In our meeting today we thanked the Minister for what she's done so far to address holiday hunger. We're pleased she listened and took action on our feedback from our previous meeting in the summer and we look forward to that happening again this time. We're excited that now we'll now have regular meetings with her team so we can work together to deliver our Charter recommendations and make sure all children can access a healthy diet every day.

Another Ambassador, Ryan, 18 from Glasgow, said:

It's so important for Ministers to not only listen to children and young people's views and experiences of food poverty, but make sure they are taking their views into account as early as possible during the policy-making process. Today, we had our second meeting this year with the Minister Ford – we're glad she values our input and we hope to keep engaging with Government in a more formalised way so that us young people can be part of lasting policy solutions.

The Ambassadors, who met with the Minister earlier in the summer to discuss their 'Right2Food' charter and new podcast series, spoke positively about the expansion of the holiday activities programme and the increase in the value of Healthy Start vouchers from £3.10 to £4.25 a week from April 2021.

These were both announced by the Government on 8 November, alongside a new £170 million Covid Winter Grant Scheme to be run by local authorities in England, at least 80% of which is earmarked to support with food, bills and other essential costs to cover the period to the end of March 2021.

The Department for Education this week wrote to local authorities with further details of the £220 million Holiday Activities and Food programme and will appoint a national organisation to support with local delivery of these projects from next spring.

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## Working together to put us on course for a clean resilient age

Thank you Shaun very much for that introduction.

Good afternoon everyone on this meeting.

Firstly, a huge thank you to Green Alliance for inviting me to speak today.

And thank you also for everything that you have done and that you continue to do, to advance climate policy and climate action.

And frankly, for the moment, we have moved into this virtual world where we are doing everything virtually.

Some of us remember a time when we actually did physical meetings and physical events.

And I am really looking forward to that time again and coming in and speaking with you live so to speak, in front of you.

So, I just wanted to talk a little bit about one of the physical visits I did manage to get in, and this was within days of being appointed to the COP26 role,

I went to New York to visit the United Nations.

I had an opportunity, alongside the Secretary General, to speak with the UN Permanent Representatives.

During that trip I also had a whole range of meetings. And there was one particular meeting that struck a real chord with me.

And it was one of these informal gatherings and we had the permanent representatives from the developing countries around the table.

And we went round the table and I asked each of them what did climate change mean for them and their country.

And then we got to the representative of one of the small island developing states.

And she said this: "Unless we tackle climate change urgently, I won't have a place to call home".

And actually, what made this really stark message so poignant, was also the manner of the delivery.

She was calm, she was collected, it was matter of fact.

And that was the point at which I resolved, that whatever else we may achieve on the road to COP, at COP26 itself, we must make this the most inclusive COP ever.

And I want to ensure that the voices of the vulnerable countries, of indigenous peoples, civil society and of course, young people, are heard.

Heard loud and clear.

And on an equal footing with larger, richer nations.

I am going to return to some of the practical things we are doing to make sure that happens. But I just want to go back to your launch, the Green Alliance's launch in 1979.

And your founding Chairman, Maurice Ash, said at the time and I quote: "We're a bunch of optimists. We are not doomsters. We believe in the possibilities of the future."

Well on the basis of that description, I very much consider myself part of the Green Alliance gang.

And there are reasons to be optimistic when it comes to climate action.

Because I do believe we are at a vital inflection point.

Where the views of governments, businesses and civil society are coalescing in a determination to tackle climate change.

Quite rightly, we have all been focused this year on the Covid emergency and that's right and proper.

But all of us recognise that the climate emergency hasn't gone away.

The clock is still ticking and those two hands are still moving inexorably closer midnight.

But we can, and are, taking action.

As we look to emerge from the dark shadow of Covid, I want 2021 to mark the beginning of the future we all want.

I want 2021 to be the year the world unites behind the Paris Agreement.

Putting it on course for a clean, resilient age.

Governments around the world are looking to build back greener.

And you've seen in China, Japan and South Korea they have committed recently to going net zero like other countries.

And crucially, what governments are doing is putting policy heft and finance



behind their intentions.

Businesses are also committing to science-based net zero targets.

If you take into account all the companies, cities, regions, and other non-state actors, which have signed-up to the UN's 'Race to Zero' Campaign launched in June, they collectively already represent 50% of the global economy and 25% of global emissions.

All these organisations remember have committed, on science-based targets, to reach net zero emissions by 2050 or, indeed, earlier.

And actually, business realises that going green is not just the right thing to do, but it is also what their customers want.

And, increasingly, is what drives shareholder value.

The UK as a country has demonstrated that green growth is possible.

Over the last 30 years we have managed to grow our economy and yet at the same time cut emissions by 43%.

Last week the Prime Minister launched the UK's blueprint for a green industrial revolution.

This is a plan to consign to history, industrial chimneys and processes, vehicle tail pipes and home heating which spew out harmful emissions.

What we want is a clean future powered by hydrogen, wind turbines and electric vehicle batteries.

Revitalising our industrial heartlands and economy and creating high-value added green jobs.

Of course, all the while civil society is rightly holding a mirror up to the actions of governments and businesses.

And you're spurring us on to change.

And each of us as individuals can play our part.

Over 100,000 people have joined the Count Us In project since it was launched in October.

Committing to reduce their carbon footprints.

You'll know that 350 young people, from over 150 countries are, right now, holding their own virtual, mock COP26.

And I was very honoured to take part in the opening ceremony last week.

All around the world, youth, indigenous peoples, and communities are taking action on the ground to adapt, and to reduce their climate impact.

Such work is absolutely critical.

The crisis we face requires us to work together across society.

Business and investors.

Cities and regions.

Universities, schools, individuals, and civil society, all of us play our part.

Of course, it has to happen alongside the work of national governments.

To adapt, to reduce emissions, and to finance the change.

Our efforts support one another.

And at the end of the day, Government policy should be there to encourage business investment.

And business innovation can provide new options for consumers.

While civil society can create the conditions leaders need to act, and represent community interests in policy-making.

When we all turn our attention to the same problems, we know that we can make progress much faster.

And that is why, as well urging countries to come forward with ambitious emissions reduction targets, and adaptation plans,

And alongside calling on donor countries to live up to their obligations on international climate finance.

Our COP26 Presidency is focussing efforts on five critical issues which need an all-of-society response:

Restoring nature, adaptation and resilience, clean energy, clean transport and finance.

And I want to give you an example of the cooperation across all parts of society, and this is through the work that we are doing with the Energy Transition Council, a group of political, financial and technical leaders who are focussed in the global power sector.

And the aim of this grouping is to speed up the global transition to clean power.

And we have representatives of business and civil society also involved in its country and regional meetings.

And when it comes to nature, we have established the Sustainable Land Use Dialogues.

And we're bringing together producer and consumer countries for discussions to tackle deforestation.

And these discussions have been informed by consultations with business and civil society, which have been held in Africa, Asia and Latin America by the Tropical Forest Alliance.

We are committed to driving this work forward over the next twelve months.

I spoke earlier about listening to diverse voices on the road to, and at, COP26.

And we want the interests of groups across society, from both the global North and South, to be heard loud and clear in the COP negotiations.

To achieve this, I have been clear that they will be at the heart of both our preparations for COP, but of course the summit itself.

It's why I was so keen to set up the COP26 international Civil Society and Youth advisory council. This is up and running.

And it's co-chaired by two young climate activists.

One from the global south, the other the global north.

As I understand it, this is the first time any COP Presidency that such a grouping has been established.

We are also holding a series of events with our fellow UN climate leaders.

To maintain momentum around the COP26 political process.

And drive real world change.

Next week I am meeting the UN Observers, who represent civil society, at a virtual event to make progress on vital negotiating issues.

Now you'll all know of course that next year, the UK holds the presidency of the G7, our partners Italy hold the presidency of the G20 and together, we share the presidency of COP26.

On the road to COP, I want to see the golden thread of climate action as a key theme, flowing strongly, like a torrent, through the G7, the G20 and every major international leader-level gathering ahead of the two weeks of COP26 in November 2021.

And the first stopover on that road is the Climate Ambition Summit which is taking place on 12 December.

The UK is hosting with the UN and France, and in partnership with Italy and Chile. And this is the point that marks the five-year anniversary of the Paris Agreement.

We are calling on countries to use this summit to announce ambitious

commitments on emissions, adaptation and climate finance.

And yes, the UK will be setting out its own Nationally Determined Contribution metric ahead of 12 December.

There will be room for non-state actors to make commitments too at the Ambition Summit.

And we will absolutely provide a platform for civil society, young people and indigenous peoples to make sure that their voices are heard.

That is something that I consider to be absolutely vital in this process.

In the run up to next November we will host more discussions, to make progress on the issues in the negotiations.

Because we all recognise that the next twelve months are critical.

We must put the world in the best possible position to unleash the full potential of the Paris Agreement.

As I have said, we all have a role to play.

So, firstly let me thank everyone who is on this call for everything that you have already done – your organisations and you individually.

Secondly, keep up the pressure and ambition level.

Please challenge leaders, wherever you find them – in schools, universities, businesses and every level of government, to do more.

Thirdly, if you have not already done so, Join the “Race to Zero” campaign.

And sign-up to “Count Us In”.

By working together, we can bring about the change we need.

At the end of COP26, I want to be able to look my friend from the small island developing state in the eye and I want to be able to say to her: all of us, working together, made a positive difference.

And we did it for today’s, and tomorrow’s, generations.

Thank you very much for having me speak and I’m very happy to answer some questions.