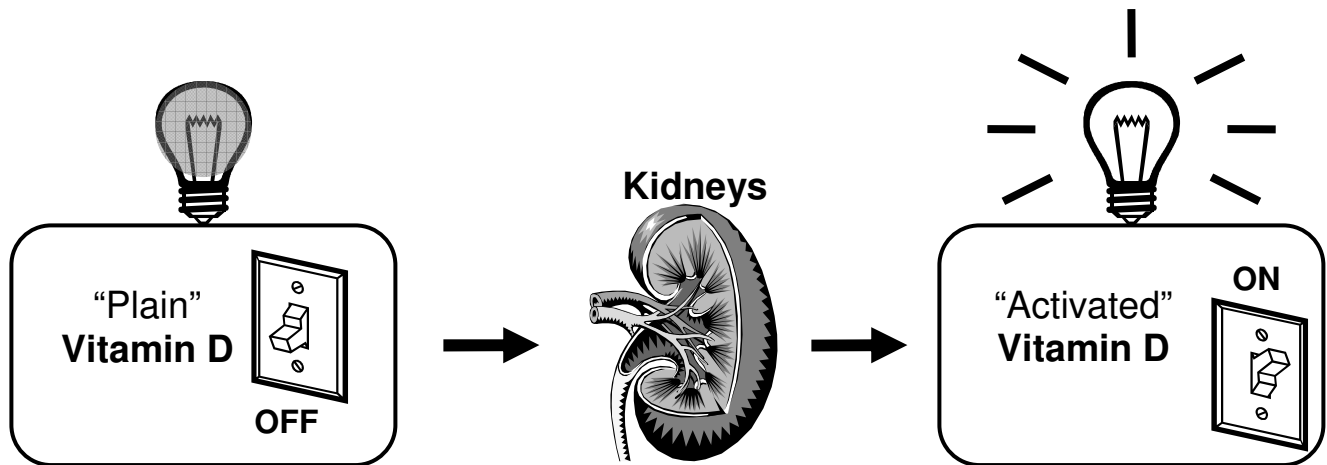


Vitamin D and PTH

What is Vitamin D?

Vitamin D is a nutrient found in many foods. Your body also makes vitamin D. Vitamin D helps your body use the calcium found in foods such as milk and dairy products.

Your kidneys take vitamin D from your food and your body, and change it into a stronger form. In other words, the kidneys “turn on” vitamin D, so it will work better. This form is called “activated” vitamin D.



What is PTH?

PTH is short for **parathyroid hormone**. PTH comes from the parathyroid glands. They are a group of 4 glands in your neck. They sit on top of your thyroid gland. PTH helps adjust the level of calcium in your blood. PTH helps take calcium stored in your bones and put it back in your blood.

When your kidneys don’t work well, they don’t “turn on” the vitamin D in your body. That means your body has trouble using the calcium in the foods you eat. To get more calcium, your parathyroid glands make lots of PTH. If your phosphorus level is too high, your body will also make more PTH. When you have too much PTH, it’s called **hyperparathyroidism**. Too much PTH means your body lets too much calcium out of your bones. Then your bones are not as strong, and they can get broken more easily.

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What can I do if my PTH level is too high?

Regular vitamin D pills won't help, because they have the form of vitamin D that is "turned off." There are medicines that work like the "turned on" form of vitamin D. Some of these drugs are called:

- Calcitriol (Rocaltrol™ and Calcijex™)
- Doxercalciferol (Hectorol™)
- Paricalcitol (Zemplar™)

If your PTH level is too high, your doctor will prescribe one of these medicines. They tell your glands to make less PTH, and that keeps your bones stronger. Sometimes your doctor will do a blood test to see how much PTH your body makes. Your doctor may need to change the medicine dose based on this test.

Your doctor and dietician may talk to you about changes in what you eat. If you are taking another medicine to help with your phosphorus level, it's very important to take that medicine with every meal. Keeping your phosphorus level normal helps keep your PTH level closer to normal.

Talk to your doctor and your dietician. They can help!

Vitamin D and PTH are complicated. Most people have a lot of questions about it. If you have questions about the information in this flyer, ask your doctor or dietician. They will be happy to help explain it to you.