

Algorithm: A Healthy Start - Folic Acid and Vitamin D Supplementation in Pregnancy and Breastfeeding (October 2018)

All pregnant and breastfeeding women should be advised to take;

- 10 microgram (400 units) **Vitamin D** daily ideally before conception, **throughout** pregnancy and whilst breast feeding. Women who may require testing for deficiency should be identified as a higher dose may be needed.
- 400 micrograms **Folic Acid** daily before conception and until week 12 of pregnancy. Women at higher risk of conceiving a child with a neural tube defect should be identified and advised to take Folic Acid 5mg daily and continue until week 12 of pregnancy. (See pink box below)

All advice given should be recorded and compliance checked at each antenatal appointment

Healthy Start Vitamins for Women

- Contain 400 micrograms of Folic Acid, 10 micrograms of Vitamin D and 70 mg of Vitamin C. It is a cost effective option and can be purchased from all [Children's Centre's](#). Women requiring a higher dose of Vitamin D or Folic Acid should be signposted to their GP.
- All preconception and pregnant women are eligible for free Healthy Start Vitamins for Women. All breastfeeding women are eligible to obtain their free first two month supply. [See link](#)
- Certain women are eligible for the vouchers (which entitle them to other items e.g. milk, fresh fruit and veg). [See link](#)
- Advice given should be recorded in the woman's records.

Folic Acid - Women at higher risk of conceiving a child with a neural tube defect;

- Either partner has a neural tube defect (or a family history) or previous pregnancy affected by a neural tube defect
- BMI $\geq 30 \text{kg/m}^2$ pre-pregnancy
- Coeliac disease (or other malabsorption state), diabetes mellitus, or is taking antiepileptic medicines (refer to BNF).
- NB: Sickle cell disease – woman to take throughout pregnancy

Women with a history of confirmed Vitamin D deficiency

Is the woman currently taking a Vitamin D supplement?

Yes - Check that dose and preparation is suitable

No - Measure Vitamin D and bone profile on GP request form

Women at increased risk of Vitamin D deficiency

Does the woman have symptoms or have multiple risk factors (see [Adult guidance](#), page 5) for Vitamin D deficiency?

Yes - Measure Vitamin D and bone profile on GP request form

No - Recommend **Healthy Start Vitamins for Women**. Stress importance of compliance as this group is at greater risk of deficiency

25(OH)D <25 nmol/L – refer to [flow chart](#)
 25(OH)D >25 and <50 nmol/L – See **text box below**
 25(OH)D >50 nmol/L - Recommend **Healthy Start Vitamins for Women** or if previous history of deficiency use enhanced supplement options

Enhanced supplement options for women at risk of D deficiency (pre-pregnancy) and for maintenance after high dose treatment;

If calcium intake is sufficient (>700mg /day – see Calcium):

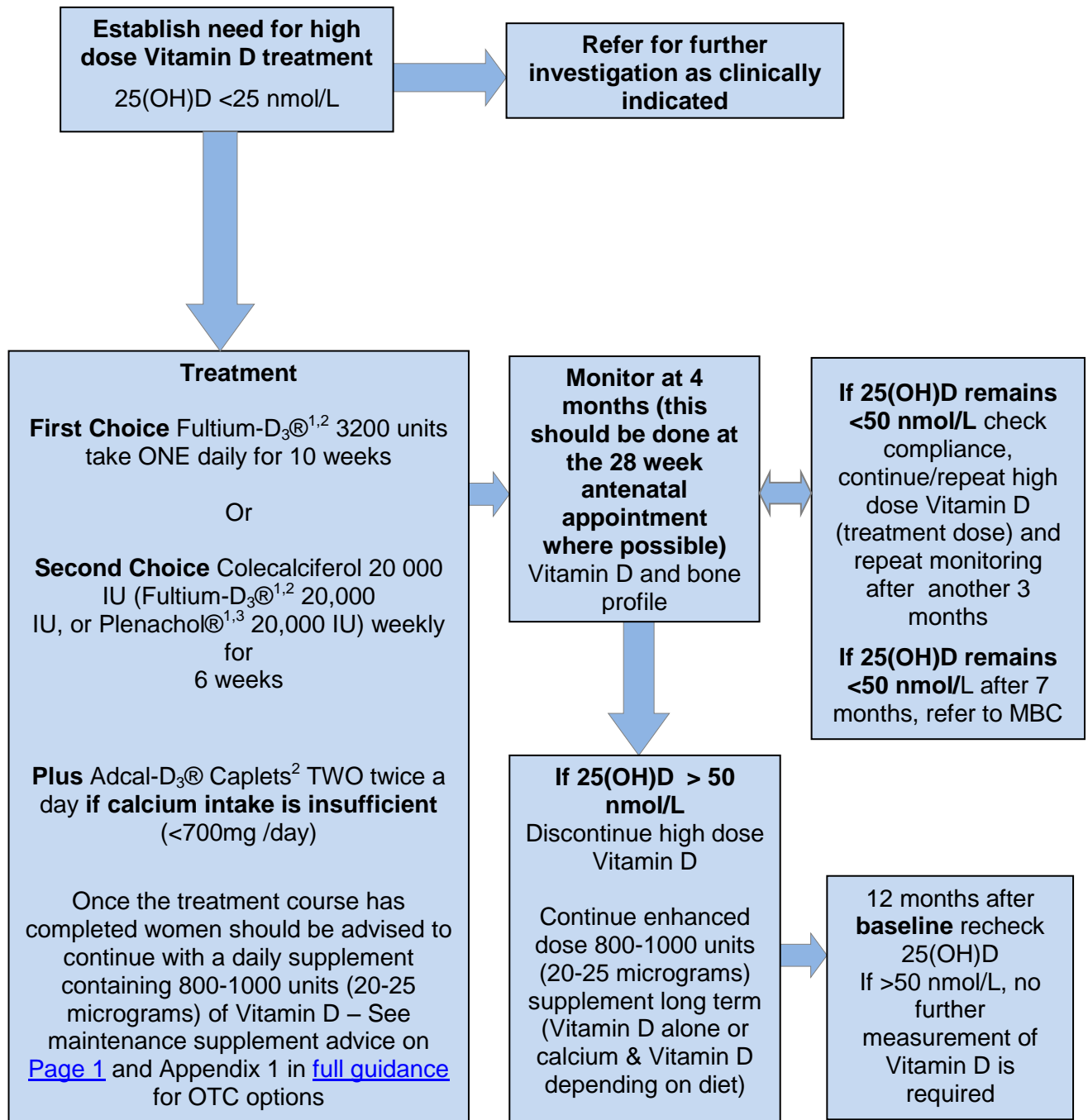
- **Healthy Start Vitamins for Women** - one daily **plus** a daily dose of 10-15 micrograms (400-600units) Vitamin D. **Encourage OTC** or prescribe as *InVita® D₃ 2,400 units/ml drops (POM)
- A daily preparation containing 20-25 micrograms (800-1000 units) colecalciferol alone. **Encourage OTC** or prescribe *Fultium-D₃® 800 units capsules (POM) **plus** 400 micrograms of Folic Acid until week 12

If calcium intake is insufficient:

- Calcium and Vitamin D - daily dose of 1200 mg calcium and 20-25 micrograms (800-1000units) Vitamin D *Adcal-D₃® Caplets (recommended dose is 2 BD) **plus** 400 micrograms of Folic Acid until week 12 **Encourage OTC** (see [Appendix 1 page 6 in full guidance](#))

*licensed preparations for use in pregnancy

High-dose Oral Vitamin D Supplementation and Monitoring



¹ Halal or kosher certified.

² Licensed preparation for use in pregnancy

³ Suitable for vegetarians

For more detailed information, please see [full guidance](#)