

## Algorithm: A Healthy Start – Folic Acid and Vitamin D Supplementation in Pregnancy and Breastfeeding (January 2022)

**All pregnant and breastfeeding women should be advised to take;**

- 10 micrograms (400 units) **Vitamin D** daily ideally before conception, **throughout** pregnancy and whilst breastfeeding. 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 milligrams of Vitamin C. It is a cost effective option of obtaining Folic acid and Vitamin D and can be purchased from all [Family Centres](#). 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 [here](#).
- Certain women are eligible for free vitamins via the [national scheme](#) (which entitles them to other items e.g. milk, fresh fruit and veg).
- 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).
- Note: Women with sickle-cell disease or thalassemia should take 5mg Folic acid 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 (request via ICE)

### Women at increased risk of Vitamin D deficiency

Does the woman have symptoms or have multiple risk factors (see [Guideline](#)) for Vitamin D deficiency?

**Yes** - Measure Vitamin D and bone profile (request via ICE)

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

25(OH)D  $< 25 \text{ nmol/L}$  – refer to [flowchart](#)

25(OH)D  $> 25$  and  $< 50 \text{ nmol/L}$  – See **text box below**

25(OH)D  $> 50 \text{ nmol/L}$  - Recommend **Healthy Start Vitamins for Women** or if previous history of deficiency use enhanced supplement options below.

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

**If calcium intake is sufficient** ( $> 700 \text{ mg/day}$  – see [Guideline](#)):

- **Healthy Start Vitamins for Women** - one daily **plus** a daily dose of 10-15 micrograms (400-600 units) Vitamin D. **Encourage OTC** or prescribe as \*InVita<sup>®</sup> D<sub>3</sub> 2,400 units/ml drops (POM)
- A daily preparation containing 20-25 micrograms (800-1000 units) colecalciferol alone. **Encourage OTC** or prescribe \*Fultium-D<sub>3</sub><sup>®</sup> 800 units capsules (POM) **plus** 400 micrograms of Folic Acid until week 12.

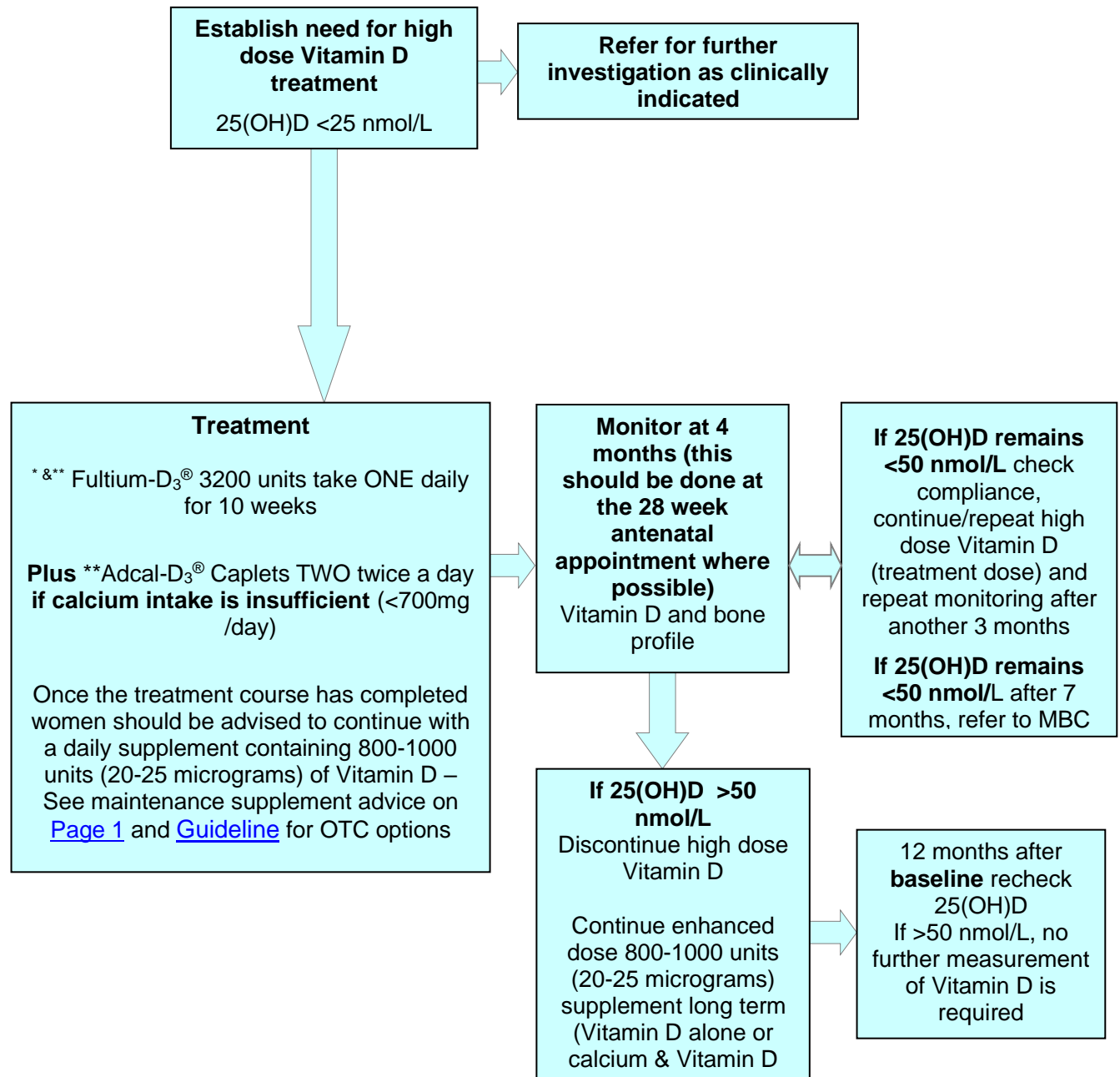
**If calcium intake is insufficient:**

- Calcium and Vitamin D - daily dose of 1200 mg calcium and 20-25 micrograms (800-1000 units) Vitamin D \*Adcal-D<sub>3</sub><sup>®</sup> caplets (recommended dose is 2 BD) **plus** 400 micrograms of Folic Acid until week 12 (**Encourage OTC**)

See [Guideline](#) for examples of preparations

\*licensed preparations for use in pregnancy

## High-dose Oral Vitamin D Supplementation and Monitoring



\* Halal or kosher certified.

\*\* Licensed preparation for use in pregnancy

For more detailed information, please see full guidance

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Vitamin D and Folic Acid in Pregnancy and Breastfeeding January 2022.

Full update and review done by Kirsty Burdett, Clinical Practice Pharmacist, NHS Sheffield CCG