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Are You Getting Enough Vitamin B12?

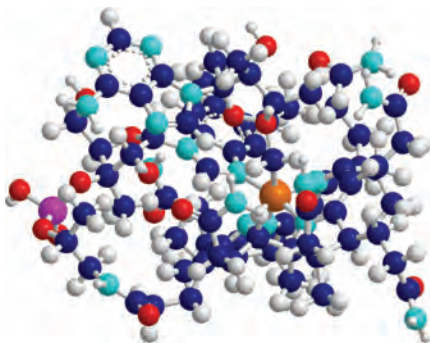
Presented by:

Your chiropractor knows the benefits you get by keeping your nerves healthy and free of subluxations. Vitamin B12 serves an important part in maintaining strong nerves. It also helps in the production of red blood cells and plays a vital role in developing energy from protein, carbohydrates and fats.

Are you at risk of B12 deficiency? Certain people are vulnerable to developing it. In this issue, we look at the significance of vitamin B12 in keeping you healthy and how you can prevent a deficiency of this crucial nutrient.

Vitamin B12 and Your Diet

Vitamin B12 is found almost exclusively in meat, fish, eggs and dairy products. Another source is breakfast cereals that have been fortified with B12.¹



Specific foods that contain a good supply of this vitamin include:

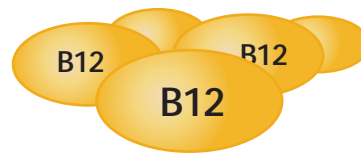
- Mollusks
- Clams
- Haddock
- White tuna
- Rainbow trout
- Beef
- Milk



Important for Brain and Blood

If you're not getting enough B12 or your body has problems absorbing it, you may notice symptoms such as fatigue, weakness and loss of appetite. Depression, memory loss, dementia and balance problems may also emerge because of low B12 levels.

B12 deficiency can lead to anemia. This condition results when your body doesn't have an ample supply of red blood cells. Your organs then do not receive enough oxygen.



QUESTION?

Vitamin B12 is important for...

- A) Developing red blood cells
- B) Keeping nerves healthy
- C) Boosting energy
- D) All of the above

ANSWER:

- D) All of the above

True or false?

Vitamin B12 deficiency is linked to anemia

ANSWER: False. BDNF is a protein

QUESTION?

What amount of physical activity is recommended for children?

- A) 20 minutes three times a week
- B) 30 minutes daily
- C) 60 minutes daily

ANSWER:

- C) 60 minutes daily

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Pernicious anemia is a specific type of anemia that occurs because your body doesn't have enough intrinsic factor. It's a protein that binds to B12 and allows the vitamin to enter your bloodstream. Without intrinsic factor, your B12 supply gets excreted through your body's waste.

Do You Need a B12 Supplement?

The people most at risk for vitamin B12 deficiency are:

- Strict vegetarians (no meat, fish, dairy or eggs)
- Vegans
- People with stomach and intestinal problems
- People over age 50

Vegetarians and vegans should closely monitor their B12 intake. People who only eat plant-based food sources may need to take a daily B12 supplement.

Anyone who has had surgery to remove or alter the size of his stomach may need supplementation. Gastric bypass surgery has become popular to treat severe obesity. However, it comes with the risk of serious complications, including the inability to absorb sufficient nutrients to stay healthy.

Stomach or intestinal disorders that interfere with the absorption of B12 include Crohn's disease, celiac disease and atrophic gastritis. In fact, according to the National Institutes of Health, nearly 30 percent of people over the age 50 have atrophic gastritis.¹

In a study published in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* on B12 deficiency among the elderly, medical researchers commented, "but it (B12 deficiency) is often unrecognized because the clinical manifestations are subtle; they are also potentially serious, particularly from a neuropsychiatric and hematological perspective."²

Studies related to neurology and psychiatry also show the impact of B12 deficiency on the brain. A Swedish study on B12 and folate (another B vitamin) showed subjects with low levels of these two nutrients had twice the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease.³

And in a research review of depression studies, scientists noted a link between depression and low levels of both folate and vitamin B12.⁴

Are you pregnant or breast-feeding? You need to be sure of getting adequate levels of B12. Deficiency in this vitamin is rare in most moms and moms-to-be. But a fetus or infant who does not receive enough B12 can suffer serious and often irreversible neurological damage.¹ It's best to be proactive and talk to your chiropractor about getting the amount of B12 that's right for you.

While not specifically linked to promoting B12 deficiency in your body, certain medications can interfere with the vitamin's absorption. Proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) are drugs prescribed for ulcers and reflux disease. These medications reduce the discharge of hydrochloric acid in the stomach. This acid is key to extracting B12 from your food.

Getting the right nutrients in the proper amounts depend on many things. You can see how receiving enough B12 hinges on factors such as your age, dietary preferences, medications and health status. Why not make an appointment with your chiropractor to discuss your dietary habits? An individualized nutrition plan allows you to gain the maximum health benefits good nutrition can offer.

Quote to Inspire

"Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice."

Steve Jobs

References and sources:

[1] Dietary Supplement Fact Sheet: Vitamin B12 - *Office of Dietary Supplements, National Institutes of Health, 2009*

[2] Vitamin B12 (cobalamin) deficiency in elderly patients extremity muscles during running. *CMAJ, August 3, 2004; 171 (3)*

[3] Vitamin B12 and folate in relation to the development of Alzheimer's disease - *Neurology 2001;56:1188-1194*

[4] Treatment of depression: time to consider folic acid and vitamin B12 - *Journal of Psychopharmacology, Vol. 19, No. 1, 59-65 (2005)*

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