

Please Take One!



SUPPLEMENT OF THE MONTH: Vitamin B12

What is Vitamin B12?

Vitamin B12 is also known as Cobalamin or Cyanocobalamin. It is one of the eight B vitamins. It is important in blood formation and in brain and nervous system functions. Vitamin B12 plays a key role in cell metabolism and energy function, and it affects the synthesis and regulation of DNA and fatty acids. Deficiencies in Vitamin B12 can cause anemia, gastrointestinal lesions, and neurological damage resulting in depression, memory loss, weakness, fatigue, and personality and mood changes.

Where is it found?

It can be found in food from animals, like meat, shellfish, poultry, eggs, milk, and liver. This form of B12 is bound to protein and the acid in a person's stomach frees the B12 from the protein so it is absorbable. B12 is also found in supplemental pills, is given in intramuscular injections, and can be used as a topical cream or nasal spray. Vitamin B12 is frequently found in B complex vitamins, which generally combine Thiamine (Vitamin B1), Riboflavin (Vitamin B2), Niacin (Vitamin B3), Pantothenic Acid (Vitamin B5), Pyridoxine (Vitamin B6) and Folic Acid.

What are the benefits?

Vitamin B12 is used to treat pernicious anemia or B12 deficiency, cyanide poisoning, and Imerslund-Grasbeck Disease. It is also effective in treating hyperhomocysteinemia and age-related macular degeneration. For some it helps with Alzheimer's Disease, angioplasty, atopic dermatitis (eczema), reduced risk of breast cancer, lung cancer and cervical cancer, canker sores, fatigue, high triglycerides, and psoriasis.

Are there interactions with food, herbs or other supplements?

In some people, potassium can decrease vitamin B12 absorption. Also, large amounts of folate intake may hide symptoms of B12 deficiency. Vitamin B12 absorption can also be decreased from excess intake of alcohol for a period longer than two weeks.