

Eating with Vitamin B12

The vitamin B12 found in food is often called cobalamin and is thought to be an important water soluble vitamin. However, it is distinct from other water soluble vitamins because it is not excreted quickly in the urine. Instead, vitamin B12 is collected and stored in the liver, kidney, and other body tissues. As a result of this storage factor of vitamin B12, a deficiency in this vitamin may not reveal itself or show its symptoms until after five or six years of diet with deficient supply of vitamin B12.

Purposes

The primary benefit of vitamin B12 in food is to serve as a methyl donor. By working with folic acid, it plays an vital role in the synthesis of DNA and red blood cells. Additionally, vitamin B12 in food is also vitally important in sustaining the health of the insulation sheath or the myelin sheath that surround all nerve cells. A deficit in the supply of vitamin B12 in food that you eat will lead to deficiency.

Deficiency of Vitamin B12

A deficiency of vitamin B12 in food often reveals itself by showing symptoms typical of a neurological dysfunction, such as senile dementia and Alzheimer's disease. There is little doubt that many of the patients suffering from Alzheimer's or exhibiting symptoms of senile dementia actually suffer from a deficiency in vitamin B12 in their diet. These symptoms are completely reversible with effective supplementation.

Another affliction associated with low level of vitamin B12 in food is asthma, as well as AIDS, depression, tinnitus, multiple sclerosis, diabetic neuropathy, and low sperm counts. Clearly, it is very important to maintain sufficient body stores of this crucial vitamin.

How much vitamin B12 do we need?

The actual amount of vitamin B12 that the body needs is really quite small. B12 is unique in this respect. Only about 2 micrograms, or 2 millionth of a gram, is required by your body per day and it can still perform its functions normally. Unfortunately, the body's ability to absorb vitamin B12 is awfully poor so that even if you take in large amounts of this vitamin, your body can only absorb so much. Even larger amounts are needed in order to achieve that level of B12 required by the body.

The richest dietary sources of vitamin B12 are liver, particularly lamb's liver, and kidneys. Eggs, cheese, and some species of fish are also excellent sources of vitamin B12. In contrast, vegetables and fruits are poor sources of B12. As a matter of fact, the only time you can find vitamin B12 at all in vegetables and plants is if these plants are contaminated with microorganisms found in the soil.