**7 Signs You Have A B12 Deficiency**



**You try to eat right and get all of your vitamins and minerals from whole, fresh foods. But vitamin deficiencies can show up as physical symptoms, despite our best efforts to eat right.**

We intake vitamins and nutrients from our food as part of our digestion process. Unlike vitamin D, which can be produced by our bodies, B-12 comes only from outside sources into the body. [B-12 is an essential nutrient](http://www.whfoods.com/genpage.php?tname=nutrient&dbid=107) that your body uses to produce red blood cells, DNA and nerves.

**B-12 and Vegans**

Unlike many vitamins, B-12 is not often found in plants. As a result, strict vegans or vegetarians are the most susceptible to B-12 deficiency. One solution is to [use products that are fortified with B-12](https://www.tylertolman.com/health-articles/sources-of-b12/), such as fortified soy or nut milks.

Microorganisms like bacteria and fungi can produce B-12. Since bacteria can be found in the soil, foods that come from the soil can have small levels of B-12. If you are scrubbing your vegetables too much, you could be removing this good bacteria.

Foods naturally containing small amounts of B-12 include mushrooms and fermented foods like tempeh. Nori, a type of toasted seaweed, will also give you a B-12 boost. Nutritional yeast can also provide a source of B-12 for vegetarians. Ovo-lacto vegetarians should get enough B-12 from eggs, milk and yogurt. You can check the foods you eat for their B-12 levels in this chart.

**A Shot of B-12**

You may have heard about B-12 injections for increased energy or weight loss. The science behind the effectiveness of these claims is lacking. Basically, taking a single vitamin and expecting to lose weight or triple your energy level is unrealistic.

**Should You Supplement?**

B-12 supplements come in either liquid or capsule form. You may also see this called cobalamin. If you avoid meat, eggs and dairy, you might be a good candidate for a B-12 supplement.

People who are at risk for B-12 deficiency include the elderly, those with HIV, people who have had weight loss surgery, and people with certain digestive disorders, such as Crohn’s disease, who have difficulty absorbing nutrients.

Pregnant or lactating women have a higher daily requirement for B-12. Due to the need to nourish your child, higher levels of B-12 are usually recommended. Your physician can tell you the right about for you and your baby.

Your diet should give you enough B-12 to avoid health problems, but if you are concerned, ask your doctor for a blood test to check your levels. A good doctor will also be able to recommend a supplement to meet your needs if you are showing signs of B-12 deficiency.

**Why B-12 is Important**

You don’t need much, in fact the daily requirement for B-12 is the lowest of all of the B vitamins. Most adults need only 2.4 micrograms per day. But it is important in many bodily functions. Deficiencies in B-12 can lead to severe health problems.

An extreme deficiency of B-12 can contribute to cardiovascular disease, anemia, stroke, memory loss, incontinence, paranoia, depression and other serious health problems. By knowing the signs of a B-12 deficiency, you can take action to reverse any negative health effects.

**Here are 7 signs you may have a B12 Deficiency**

**1. Fatigue**

Feeling tired? B-12 is important for aerobic energy in the body. Without enough of this vitamin, our bodies are not getting the oxygen and energy that we need. Lightheadedness is also a sign that you aren’t getting enough B-12.

**2. Tingling and Numbness**

Losing sensation in hands and feet along with the tingling sensation of pins and needles could be a sign of a B-12 deficiency. Check with your doctor for blood work to determine the cause.

**3. Joint Pain**

Severe joint pain that isn’t due to injury or chronic inflammation, like arthritis, could be cause for alarm. Also, slower reflexes have been observed in B-12 deficient patients.

**4. Rapid Heartbeat or Breathing**

Shortness of breath, heart palpitations and a rapid heartbeat have all been associated with B-12 deficiency. If in doubt, get it checked out.

**5. Weakness**

In one [case study](http://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/vitamin-b12-deficiency-can-be-sneaky-harmful-201301105780) of severe B-12 deficiency, a man had trouble walking due to the weakness that he experienced. In addition to muscle weakness, balance problems and staggering could indicate a problem.

**6. Jaundice**

Jaundice is a yellowing of skin or whites of the eyes and can indicate several serious medical problems.

**7. Swollen tongue**

Some patients with B-12 deficiency experience an inflammation of the tongue. Other signs related to the mouth also include a smooth tongue as well as a decreased sense of taste.

Seek the attention of your wellness professional if you experience any of these 7 signs of B-12 deficiency. A doctor can determine if you have a deficiency with a simple blood test. Being aware of the sources of B-12 can help you to make sure that you and your family are getting enough and will help prevent potentially serious medical complications.