



Why is Vitamin B12 Important?

Vitamin B₁₂ is an essential vitamin that must be gained through diet and is important for healthy nerve function. Vitamin B₁₂ is captured in the stomach using a protein called **intrinsic factor** and transported to the intestines for absorption. As we age, the ability to absorb vitamin B₁₂ decreases due to the lower levels of stomach acid produced in the body.

People at risk for B₁₂ deficiency are older adults and those who follow a strict vegan or vegetarian diet*. Other factors that may affect vitamin B₁₂ absorption are the use of acid reducing medications and antacids, digestion problems, stomach or intestinal surgery or disease and alcohol consumption.

*only in those who do not take B₁₂ supplements or add Nutritional Yeast to their diet.

| B VITAMINS & RDAs Recommended Dietary Allowances for adults ages 50 years or older | FUNCTION | FOOD SOURCES |
|---|---|--|
| Thiamin (B₁) Females 1.1 mg/Males 1.2 mg daily | Coenzyme in glucose metabolism Important for nerve function | Legumes, seeds, nuts, enriched grains, and *supplements |
| Riboflavin (B₂) Females 1.1 mg/Males 1.3 mg daily | Coenzyme needed for energy metabolism | Dairy products, whole grains, leafy green vegetables, meats, and *supplements |
| Niacin (B₃) Females 14 mg/Males 16 mg daily | Coenzyme needed for energy Metabolism, lipid (fat) synthesis and breakdown | Fish, beef, chicken, peanuts, legumes, enriched grains, and *supplements |
| Pantothenic acid AI**=5mg daily | Coenzyme needed for energy metabolism and lipid breakdown | Meat, legumes, whole grains, and *supplements |
| Vitamin B₆ Females 1.5 mg/Males 1.7 mg daily | Coenzyme in glucose metabolism Important for nerve function | Fish, poultry, meat, legumes, nuts, seeds, and *supplements |
| Biotin (B₇) AI** =30 µg daily | Coenzyme in glucose production and lipid synthesis | Egg yolks and liver |
| Folate 400 µg daily | Coenzyme in DNA synthesis and amino acid metabolism | Leafy greens vegetables, legumes, enriched grains, seeds, and *supplements |
| Vitamin B₁₂ 2.4 µg daily | Coenzyme in folate metabolism, nerve function and brain health | Eggs, trout, clams, chicken, beef, cheese, *supplements, <i>Nutritional Yeast</i> – which can be found at your local health food store |

*Ask your health practitioner before adding supplements to your diet. AI**=Adequate Intakes