
Vitamin B12 (Cobalamin)

What is vitamin B12?

B12 is a vitamin that comes mostly from animal sources. Its job is to help form red blood cells and DNA. B12 supports the brain and nerve cells. It plays a role in breaking down homocysteine (protein) that, if too high, can cause harm to the heart, and increase the chances of Alzheimer's and dementia.

Who has a higher risk of a B12 deficiency?

- Older adults (60 years and older)
- People with pernicious anemia
- Gastrointestinal disorders (Crohn's or Celiac disease)
- Gastrointestinal surgeries where the stomach is partially or fully removed
- Vegetarians and vegans

What are the signs and symptoms of deficiency?

- Muscle weakness
- Smooth and tender tongue
- Numbness and tingling in hands and feet
- Trouble walking
- Nausea
- Decreased appetite
- Irritability
- Diarrhea
- Fatigue
- Irregular heart rate

What medications interact with B12?

- Prilosec, Prevacid, Tagamet, and Zantac are medications that reduce stomach acid and help with heartburn, indigestion, and an upset stomach. These medications decrease the absorption of B12.
- Metformin is used to treat diabetes and can lower the absorption and amount of B12.

How much B12 should I get each day?

Dietary Recommended Allowance:

	Age (years)	B12(mcg)
Men and Women	14+	2.4
Pregnant Women	14+	2.6
Lactating Women	14+	2.8

What foods have B12?

- Meat
- Poultry
- Shellfish
- Milk
- Yogurt
- Fortified cereals

What supplements are available for B12 deficiency?

- Multivitamins/minerals supplements
- Supplements containing B-complex vitamins
- Supplements containing only B-12
- Some patients may need B-12 shots