

# Vitamin B-12

## What Does Vitamin B-12 Do?

Vitamin B-12 works with folate (another vitamin) to help your body make new cells, including blood cells and nerve cells.

## What Is Vitamin B-12 Deficiency?

Vitamin B-12 deficiency means your body's levels of vitamin B-12 are low. Symptoms of vitamin B-12 deficiency include:

- Weakness or poor balance
- Constipation
- Loss of appetite
- Anemia
- Numbness and tingling in the hands and feet
- Depression, confusion, poor memory, or dementia

Many things can cause these symptoms. Only your doctor can diagnose a vitamin B-12 deficiency. If it is diagnosed, you may need to take a vitamin B-12 supplement.

## Who Is at Risk of Vitamin B-12 Deficiency?

Some people are at risk because their bodies cannot absorb enough vitamin B-12 from foods:

- If you have low levels of stomach acid, you may not absorb enough vitamin B-12.
- Other digestive problems may also keep your body from absorbing this vitamin.
- The body's ability to absorb vitamin B-12 decreases as you age.
- Some medicines block vitamin B-12 absorption:
  - omeprazole (brand name Prilosec)
  - lansoprazole (brand name Prevacid)
  - Tagamet, Pepcid, Zantac
  - metformin

People who do not eat enough foods with vitamin B-12 may also be at risk. Vitamin B-12 is found naturally only in animal foods (meat, fish, dairy). People who do not eat animal foods can get vitamin B-12 from foods fortified with this vitamin, such as fortified rice or soy milk or some cereals. They can also take a supplement.

## Can You Get Too Much Vitamin B-12?

It is uncommon for people to have vitamin B-12 levels that are too high. Extra vitamin B-12 is usually removed in the urine.

## How Much Vitamin B-12 Do You Need?

Here are guidelines for how much vitamin B-12 most healthy teens and adults need each day:

- Teens (ages 14 years and older) and adults: 2.4 micrograms (mcg)
- Pregnant teens and women: 2.6 mcg
- Breastfeeding teens and women: 2.8 mcg



## Which Foods Have Vitamin B-12?

Food	Serving Size	Vitamin B-12 (mcg)
Boneless lamb chop, cooked	3 ounces	2.7
Fortified cereals	1 cup	1–6 (read food labels)
Light tuna canned in water, drained	3 ounces	2.5
Salmon, cooked	3 ounces	2.4
Ground beef, 90% lean, cooked	3 ounces	2.3
Eye round roast and steak, cooked	3 ounces	1.4
Plain yogurt, low-fat	1 cup	1.4
Roast turkey	3 ounces	1.3
Milk, nonfat (skim)	1 cup	1.3
Beef hot dog, cooked	1	0.9
Cottage cheese, low-fat	4 ounces	0.7
Boneless top loin pork roast, cooked	3 ounces	0.6
Fortified soymilk or rice milk	1 cup	0.6
Chicken breast, cooked	1 cup	0.5
Dark meat chicken, cooked	1 cup	0.4
Cheddar cheese	1 slice	0.2
American cheese	1 ounce	0.2