



What's the Deal with B12 Deficiency?

Message from Milly

Greetings and a Happy 2023 to all!

We're kicking off this year's newsletter series with a topic near and dear to my heart: B12 deficiency.

I see a lot of adults and children struggling with this...and it hasn't always been this way.

A few decades ago, B12 deficiency was something only seniors, people with certain pre-existing conditions (such as lack of intrinsic factor or pernicious anemia) taking specific medications, or vegetarians/vegans had to be concerned about.

However, these days it affects the young, the old, the plant-based, the meat-based, the otherwise healthy, and everyone in between.

In fact, sub-clinical B12 deficiency is estimated to affect up to 26% of the general population [1].

So, what *is* the deal with B12 deficiency?

Specifically, how can a person who is eating B12-rich foods like meat, eggs, dairy products, etc., be lacking this essential nutrient?

In this newsletter, we'll get into the causal factors behind mystery B12 deficiency and insufficiency, signs, and symptoms to watch for, and the best food and supplement sources.

Finally, we'd love to hear from you about



newsletter topics of interest!

If there's a health topic you'd like us to cover, just hit reply to this email, and we'll consider it as part of our 2023 content plan.

Blessings to all!

-Milly

Reference:

[1] <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28660890/>



Why Are So Many People B12 Deficient These Days?

This is the million-dollar question!

Fortunately, pioneering integrative health practitioners and researchers have shed some light on the causal factors behind the rise in B12 deficiency.

Here's what we know about the lesser-known causes of B12 deficiency.

I've also added some of my clinical observations throughout the last 30+ years:

- **Genetic mutations:** such as MTHFR and others can hinder the absorption of B vitamins, including B12 and folate.[1]
- **Gut health issues:** can inhibit the absorption of B12 in the intestinal tract. SIBO (small intestinal bacterial overgrowth), for example, is often present in IBS (irritable bowel syndrome) and inflammation of the intestines can cause B12 deficiency. [2]
- **Digestive issues:** such as lack of hydrochloric acid and gastritis have been linked to B12 deficiency.[3]
- **Autoimmune conditions:** such as Celiac (which makes me wonder about those with gluten sensitivity too) and Type 1 diabetes, are also connected to B12 deficiency.[2]
- **Thyroid problems:** like Hashimoto's Thyroiditis.[4]
- **Medications are a big one!** Some of the worst offenders are:
 - Metformin[5]
 - Prescription or over-the-counter antacids/proton pump inhibitors[6]
 - Birth Control Pills[7] ([this article](#) from *Scientific American* is a must-read for

- anyone on the pill.)
- Nitrous Oxide/Laughing Gas can reduce B12 stores in some people. The effects seem to vary from person to person, but it's worth keeping in mind if you tend toward B12 deficiency and are considering nitrous oxide for a medical procedure or during labor and delivery.[8]
 - **Body Burden/Toxicity:** This is one of my observations as excess toxicity can hinder various bodily functions, such as digestive or liver function, leading to nutrient insufficiencies.
 - **Chronic Stress:** This is another of my observations based on clinical experience and the fact that chronic stress can deplete B vitamins and other nutrients.
 - **Deficiencies or insufficiency passed on from parents to child:** Most literature focuses on how B12 deficiency in the mother affects the fetus, but I have a feeling the father's B12 status plays a role too. We cover this more in the next section.

With so many potential causes, it's no wonder many people struggle with B12.

However, by becoming aware of the causal and contributing factors, you're in an excellent position to better optimize and protect your B12 levels.

References:

1:

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/09/080908135942.htm>

2: [https://health.usnews.com/health-](https://health.usnews.com/health-news/blogs/eat-run/articles/2018-05-21/4-overlooked-causes-of-vitamin-b12-deficiency)

[news/blogs/eat-run/articles/2018-05-21/4-overlooked-causes-of-vitamin-b12-deficiency](https://health.usnews.com/health-news/blogs/eat-run/articles/2018-05-21/4-overlooked-causes-of-vitamin-b12-deficiency)

3:

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/22831-vitamin-b12-deficiency>

4: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35761487/>

5: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34326945/>

6:

[https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/27000](https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/270007)

[7](https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/270007)

7: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-birth-control-pills-affect-your-nutritional-needs/>

8: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35103219/>

Signs & Symptoms of B12 Deficiency or Insufficiency

The most common symptom of B12 deficiency is a lack of energy.

However, there are other tell-tale symptoms everyone should know about.

Including[1] [2]:

- Anemia
- Anxiety and depression
- Decreased appetite
- Dementia
- Diarrhea
- Fast heart rate
- Fertility issues
- Lack of stamina/endurance
- Memory or cognitive problems (at any age)
- Mood imbalance
- Muscle weakness
- Nerve damage
- Numbness or tingling in hands and feet
- Ovulation and menstruation problems
- Sleep issues
- Smooth and tender tongue
- Trouble walking
- Weight loss

B12 deficiency in pregnant and nursing mothers may also cause neural tube defects, developmental delays, failure to thrive, and anemia in offspring.

So, if you're planning on becoming pregnant, are pregnant, and/or nursing, ask to have your B12 levels checked!

How to get your B12 levels checked

B12 levels are typically assessed using a standard blood test or B12 test.

You can also order at-home urine kits.

Although a [BioEnergetic Assessment](#) cannot diagnose a B12 deficiency, we can determine if your body resonates with a B12 supplement.

References:

1: <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/vitamin-b12-deficiency-anemia>

2: <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/VitaminB12-HealthProfessional/>





As always, the information in this newsletter is provided for educational purposes only and is not meant to replace the advice or care of your medical provider.

All the links to products are provided for educational purposes and are not affiliate links.

The best food sources of B12 come from animal products, including:

- Organ meats, like liver (if you eat liver, please only procure from a very clean, grass-fed, and trusted source)
- Meats (beef, lamb, bison, venison, etc.)
- Poultry (chicken, turkey, quail, etc.)
- Fish and seafood (especially clams and sardines)
- Dairy products
- Eggs

There are some plant-based sources of B12, including:

- Nutritional yeast (but take care as this is high in natural glutamate, which can be problematic for people with MSG sensitivity)
- Fortified plant milks
- Fortified cereals and grains
- Fermented soy products, such as miso and tempeh, may contain small amounts

A supplement may be beneficial if you're a vegan, vegetarian, or already deficient in B12 (or trending in that direction).

The best B12 supplements are **methylcobalamine** and/or **adenosylcobalamin** because they can be absorbed by those with genetic mutations.

My favorite brands are:

- **Energetix Phyto B Complex:** contains a complete blend of B-vitamins, including B12, plus Rhodiola Rosea for adrenal and energy support. These are great for adults and kids.
- **Pure Encapsulations B12 folate tablets** are also wonderful for adults, particularly women of childbearing age.

For children who cannot swallow pills, a liquid methylcobalamine or adenosylcobalamin with no added sugars, artificial flavors, or colors is easy to hide in smoothies, yogurt, etc.

To order supplements, email Holly at: info@quintessentialhealth.net

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