

# WHAT IS VITAMIN B12?

Vitamin B12, also called cobalamin, is a nutrient that helps keep the body's nerve and blood cells healthy and helps make DNA, the genetic material in all cells. It is also important for metabolism.



## What foods provide vitamin B12?

Plant foods may be fortified with B12. These include:

- Fortified breakfast cereals
- Nutritional yeasts
- Fortified soy milk
- Veggie burgers

To find out if vitamin B12 has been added to a food product, check the food label.

## How much do I need?

The best way to get the daily requirement of essential vitamins is to eat a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, fortified dairy foods, legumes (dried beans), lentils and whole grains.

Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDAs) for vitamin B12:

Men: 2.4 mcg

Women: 2.4 mcg

## Am I getting enough?

Most people in the United States get enough vitamin B12 from the foods they eat. But some people have trouble absorbing vitamin B12 from food. Your doctor can test your vitamin B12 level to see if you have a deficiency.

Certain groups may not get enough vitamin B12 or have trouble absorbing it:

- Many older adults, who do not have enough hydrochloric acid in their stomach to absorb the vitamin B12 naturally present in food.
- People with pernicious anemia whose bodies do not make the intrinsic factor needed to absorb vitamin B12.
- People who have had gastrointestinal surgery, such as weight loss surgery or who have digestive disorders, such as celiac disease or Crohn's disease.
- Vegetarians and vegans may be at risk for low levels of vitamin B12 because only animal foods contain B12.

### References:

1. (n.d.). Retrieved January 21, 2015, from <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/vitaminb12-healthprofessional>



## What happens if I do not get enough?

Vitamin B12 deficiency is rare in the young, but it is not unusual in older people.

- ✦ Vitamin B12 deficiency causes tiredness, weakness, constipation, loss of appetite, weight loss and megaloblastic anemia.
- ✦ Nerve problems, such as numbness and tingling in the hands and feet, can also occur.
- ✦ Vitamin B12 deficiency can damage the nervous system even in people who do not have anemia, so it is important to treat a deficiency as soon as possible.

## Autumn Chowder

### Ingredients:

- ✦ 1 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- ✦ 1 onion, diced
- ✦ 1 tbsp. all purpose flour
- ✦ 32 oz. low sodium vegetable broth
- ✦ 4 red potatoes
- ✦ 2/3 cup soy milk, plain
- ✦ 2 cup frozen corn
- ✦ 1 cup frozen peas
- ✦ 2 cup fresh carrots, chopped
- ✦ 2 garlic cloves
- ✦ 4 tbsp. nutritional yeast flakes
- ✦ 1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper
- ✦ 1/2 tsp. salt

### Directions:

1. In a large saucepan over medium high heat add olive oil and sauté onion about five minutes, until tender.
2. Mix in flour, coating the onion. Add broth and bring to a boil, whisking constantly until smooth.
3. Reduce heat, add potatoes and simmer 20 minutes until tender. Slightly mash potatoes in soup, then stir in corn, peas, carrots and soy milk.
4. Cook another five minutes, remove from heat. Season with salt.



## Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 1/2 cup (340g)  
Servings Per Container 10

Amount Per Serving

**Calories** 190 **Calories from Fat** 20

% Daily Value\*

<b>Total Fat</b> 2.5g	<b>4%</b>
Saturated Fat 0g	<b>0%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 350mg	<b>15%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 38g	<b>13%</b>
Dietary Fiber 6g	<b>24%</b>
Sugars 7g	

**Protein** 7g

Vitamin A 90% • Vitamin C 30%

Calcium 6% • Iron 10%

\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram:

Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4



LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY  
HEALTH