

Mental Health, Physical Health & B Vitamins – Nature's Valium

If you feel stressed out, anxious, irritable, tired, run down, cranky, muddled, or confused, you may need to up your intake of B vitamins. If your intake is low, deficient or depleted, you will feel an instant boost in energy and well-being.

Vitamins are molecules that work as catalysts for chemical reactions within the body. The B vitamins are often found together, working together to perform various functions. They help carbohydrates break down to glucose, the process whereby our cells produce energy, and they aid in the breakdown of fats and proteins, providing fuel for the proper function of our nervous system and brain. B vitamins are essential for neurotransmitters and nerve tissue. They help our bodies form red blood cells and regulate homocysteine levels. Folic acid (B9) and B12 are essential for normal, healthy, fetal development.

For proper B vitamin production and assimilation, one must have a healthy gut. Please check out *How To Heal Your Gut* for more information on that.

B Vitamin Deficiency

B vitamin deficiencies affect every system in the body. Mild deficiencies can affect mood and health, can cause inflammation and a host of other symptoms both physical and cognitive. Severe deficiencies can be life-threatening or be causal factors for serious conditions including anemia, heart disease, depression, pellagra, dementia, paranoia, and delusion.

B vitamins are nature's valium; they assist with sleep, mood stabilization, and cognition. They are a standard treatment for PMS and for those suffering from irritability, anxiety, or depression. B vitamins are also gaining recognition as a treatment for stuttering, with favorable results for about 30% of cases.

Vitamin	Deficiency	What It Can Help	Sources
Vitamin B1 (thiamin) Integral to converting simple carbohydrates to glucose. It is vital to the nervous system and brain and helps make new cells. B1 is found in nearly all foods but is often destroyed by processing.	Deficiency can cause irritability, confusion, and weight loss. Affects the heart, the nervous system, and digestive system. Deficiency is linked to neuritis, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, alcohol-related brain disease, and beriberi. Severe deficiency can be fatal.	Digestive problems including poor appetite, ulcerative colitis, and ongoing diarrhea. Increase mental acuity. A lot of B1 is used to process alcohol, therefore take B complex after drinking.	Vegetables: asparagus, brussel sprouts, green peas, beet greens, spinach, sweet potato. Beans & Legumes: navy, black, pinto, lima, kidney, lentils, peanuts. Whole grains: unpolished rice, barley, oats Seeds & Nuts: sunflower seeds, sesame seeds, flax seeds Fruits: watermelon, oranges Other Foods: liver
Vitamin B2 (riboflavin) Helps make red blood cells and is believed to help incorporate iron into the red blood cells.	Mild deficiency results in cracked lips, swelling and inflammation of the mouth, throat, and tongue as well as inflammation of the skin. Impaired blood cell production, impaired iron absorption. A deficiency may be associated with cataracts and Parkinson's	Reduces homocysteine levels, iron deficiency anemia, hypertension	Vegetables: Beet greens, spinach, asparagus, crimini mushrooms, collard greens, sweet potato, green peas. Other Foods: eggs, turkey, tempeh, sardines, tuna

Vitamin B3 (niacin) Needed to convert fats, carbohydrates, and proteins into energy. B3 is also an important dietary antioxidant.	Mild deficiency causes fatigue, indigestion, vomiting, canker sores, and depression. Severe deficiency causes pellagra, a disease that can be fatal. A deficiency may be associated with Reynaud's disease, schizophrenia, and Type 1 diabetes	Lowers LDL cholesterol, raises HDL cholesterol, lowers triglycerides, reduces hardening of the arteries, and reduces risk of a second heart attack.	Vegetables: asparagus, crimini mushrooms, potatoes, sweet potato, green peas Animal Protein: tuna, chicken, turkey, salmon, lamb, beef, sardines, shrimp Nuts and Seeds: peanuts, sunflower seeds Other: brown rice, barley
Vitamin B5 (pantothenic acid) Critical for manufacturing red blood cells and sex hormones.	Deficiency causes depression and irritability, vomiting, and fatigue.	Helps reduce triglycerides.	Vegetables: avocado, crimini and shitake mushrooms, sweet potato, green peas
Vitamin B6 (pyridoxine and other forms) Helps to form hemoglobin, is needed to metabolize carbohydrates and for neurotransmitters and the immune system	Deficiency causes depression and cognitive problems, skin inflammation, burning feet, sore tongue, anemia, and chronic inflammation of the body. Severe deficiency can lead to convulsions.	Liver detox, PMS, depression, immune system function.	Vegetables: sweet potatoes, potatoes, spinach, cabbage, turnip greens, garlic, winter squash, bok choy, bell peppers, avocado, green peas. Animal Protein: tuna, chicken, turkey, beef, salmon. Beans and Legumes: lentils, lima beans, pinto beans. Other Foods: banana, sunflower seeds
Vitamin B7 (biotin—often just called biotin) Essential for carbohydrate and fat metabolism and for neurotransmitters, tissue, bone marrow, sweat glands, skin, hair, and more.	Deficiency causes nausea, muscle pain, anemia, seizures, and depression. A deficiency interferes with other B vitamins' ability to help the nervous system function properly.	Cradle cap, diabetes, hair loss, fatigue, rashes, and brittle nails.	Vegetables: sweet potatoes, onions, tomatoes, carrots Grains: oats Nuts: peanuts, almonds, walnuts Other Foods: eggs, salmon, bananas

Vitamin B9 (folate–folic acid) Necessary for fetal development, red blood cell development and control of homocysteine.	Deficiency can cause sterility and infertility, anemia, osteoporosis, dementia, and cancer. Essential to prevent birth defects.	Irritability, general, mental or physical fatigue, forgetfulness, confusion, periodontal disease. Helps prevent homocysteine build up. Helps prevent dementia.	Vegetables: asparagus, spinach, turnip greens, broccoli, Romaine lettuce, bok choy, cauliflower, green peas, avocados, leeks, fennel, summer squash, brussel sprouts Beans: lentils, pinto, garbanzo, black, navy, kidney Other: papaya, quinoa
Vitamin B12 (cyanocobalamin) Helps make red blood cells, DNA, nerve tissue, neurotransmitters.	Deficiency affects balance, causes weakness and fatigue, numbness and tingling in extremities. Severe deficiency can lead to pernicious anemia, paranoia, confusion, depression, delusions, and memory loss.	Reduces homocysteine levels. Treats depression.	Animal Protein: sardines, salmon, tuna, cod, lamb, shrimp, scallops, beef, yogurt, milk

Supplementation

B vitamins are water soluble. Unlike fat-soluble vitamins, they are not stored in the body, with the exception of B12, which is stored in the liver. Due to this lack of retention, it is important to provide the body with these vitamins on a daily basis.

Update: Sciences is discovering that a healthy gut microbiome produces many of the B vitamins we need. Again, see *How To Heal Your Gut*.

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A healthy, diverse diet that includes plenty of vegetables, legumes, and animal protein should provide all of the B vitamins needed, however, our ability to metabolize B vitamins can be impaired with age, with digestive disorders, with alcohol consumption, with pharmaceuticals, and by certain health conditions. Celiac disease and Crohn's disease for example, seriously hamper the body's ability to absorb B12.

At 50 years of age and older, supplementation with a good whole food complex B vitamin should be seriously considered.

Vegetarians, especially vegans, face a serious challenge in acquiring enough B12 through their diet. Supplementation is strongly recommended.

Studies conducted more than 20 years ago warned that long term use of one B vitamin may result in a deficiency of other B vitamins. It is best to take B complex vitamins to avoid this possibility. Though this caution should be widely known, medical doctors routinely prescribe one B vitamin, such as B6 or B12.

When gut health is not optimal, vitamin B is not assimilated properly. If you have a B vitamin deficiency or just find yourself needing them regularly, check out *Gluten, Candida, Leaky Gut Syndrome, and Autoimmune Diseases and The Power of Our Hormones and How To Balance Them*.

Related Products:

- Basic: Basic B Complex – Thorne Research
- Extra B5: Stress B-Complex – Thorne Research
- Extra B6: B-Complex #6 – Thorne Research
- Extra B12: B-Complex #12 – Thorne Research
- Healthy Fats
- Shillington's Total Nutrition Formula

Recommended Reading:

- *Natural Remedies for Depression*

- *Natural Remedies for Chronic Stress*
- *Natural Remedies for Adrenal Fatigue*

Sources:

- *How Stuff Works*
- *Harvard School of Public Health*
- *Mayo Clinic*
- *Whole Foods -Healthiest Foods*