

Sources of Vitamin B12

Vitamin B12 is a truly extraordinary vitamin, unique even among all the other B vitamins present in nature. The reason for this uniqueness lies in the fact that only trace amounts of this vitamin is required and the body already makes full use of it. For example, ten micrograms of B12 spread over a day seems to be capable of providing adequate supply for the body to use.

Vitamin B12 is also known as cobalamin, referring to the fact that it contains the metal, cobalt. The primary benefit of vitamin B12 appears to be promoting and maintaining the normal function of healthy nerve cells and red blood cells. Vitamin B12 is also needed to help manufacture DNA, the genetic material in all cells.

Vitamin B12 is bound to protein in food, so the likeliest sources of vitamin B12 are foods rich in proteins and amino acids, which are the building blocks of proteins. When you eat vitamin B12 food sources, the vitamin is released from the food through a reaction caused by the hydrochloric acid released by the stomach. During digestion and once the vitamin B12 is released from the food sources, the vitamin combines with a substance called gastric intrinsic factor (IF). This complex can then be metabolized by the intestinal tract.

What other foods have vitamin B12?

Exact examples of vitamin B12 food sources include animal foods such as poultry, fish, meat, eggs, milk, and dairy products. Another good food source of vitamin B12 is fortified breakfast cereals, which is a particularly valuable source of vitamin B12 for vegetarians. Because plants and vegetables could never be regarded as vitamin B12 food sources, vegetarians stand more chance of suffering from deficiency of this vitamin. To make up for the loss, vitamin B12 food sources fortified with the vitamin are made available for them.

Other sources of vitamin B12 are mollusks and clams (mixed species, cooked). Three ounces of these sea foods contain as much as 84.1 micrograms of vitamin B12, equivalent to 1400 Daily Value (DV).

One slice of braised liver or beef is also a good vitamin B12 food source, having as much as 47.9 micrograms of vitamin B12, equivalent to 780 DV. Trout, salmon, rainbow, sockeye, and fortified breakfast cereals contain vitamin B12 ranging from 6.0 to 2.4 micrograms.

Even fast food, such as cheeseburgers and tacos, contain a decent amount of vitamin B12. And yogurt, tuna, haddock, pork, milk, eggs, American pasteurized cheeses, and chicken have vitamin B12 as well.