

B Vitamins working together to trigger critical biochemical reactions throughout your body

An increasingly vocal group of nutritionists and integrative practitioners argue that B vitamins play a critical role in heart health and immunity, and also provide widely effective treatments for headache, fatigue, mood, stress and menstrual disorders.

"B vitamins are real multi-taskers and are involved in so many critical processes," says Kathie Swift, MS, RD, LDN, nutrition director for Food As Medicine, a professional training program at The Center for Mind-Body Medicine (CMBM) in Washington, D.C. "They are spark-plugs in everything from energy metabolism to detoxification to mood to immunity and gut health."

Given how critical B vitamins are to our health and well-being, it's clear we need to guard against running too low. High-risk groups who are prone to B deficiency are:

- Those over age 65, who are less efficient at absorbing vitamin B-12 through ordinary digestion because of a decrease in the acidity of the stomach.
- Vegetarians, who often miss out on major sources of B-12 in their daily meals.
- Smokers and drinkers, who may find themselves deficient in B-6.

- Those that eat junk food/fast food/processed food, which is about 60% of Americans.

Unlike other vitamins, scientists understand B's as a complex of chemically distinct vitamins often found in the same foods and frequently functioning together as a group. B's effect every organ system and all aspects of our health. B's are crucial to methylation, the process by which protein and DNA are produced and sustained in the body. This process helps the heart, brain function, and mood. A B deficiency slows methylation, which results in neurotransmitter levels dropping. This, in turn, results in psychiatric issues and the liver having trouble cleaning toxins from the body and blood. Another harsh factor is slowed methylation results in the destabilization of DNA, propelling out-of-control cell growth and increasing cancer risk. Researchers have associated the intake of B-1 and B-3 with improved survival for breast cancer, and B-9, B-2, and B-6 with lowered risk of colorectal cancer. Dozens of studies on cancer show the B's are essential in slowing or preventing the disease.

B's are essential for heart health. Along with vitamin C, vitamin D, vitamin E, Omega-3 fats, and co-enzyme Q10, vitamin B-6 and B-12 play a huge role in lowering the

levels of amino acid homocysteine. Even high cholesterol can often be treated with B's. Studies have shown niacin reduced levels by an average of 23% compared to some drugs such as Lovastatin.

Those that feel depressed and have anxiety should up the amount of B-12 in their diet. Studies have shown that up to 30% of patients hospitalized for depression are deficient in B-12.

How To Get The B's You Need

Foods highest in the B's include brewer's and torula yeast, sunflower seeds, wheat germ, liver, and lamb. Other good sources include legumes like kidney and lima beans, clams, peanut butter, and in moderation, beef and tuna fish.

Other ways of getting the B's you need are through multi-vitamins, B drops, B-complex shot injections. Because multi-vitamins have to go through your digestive system, absorption on average is approximately 11-12%. B vitamin drops go straight to the blood system, but you need to do the drops three or more times daily. B-12 and B-complex injections are highly concentrated injections that go straight to the blood system.

"Most people are deficient in at least one nutrient, and virtually everyone needs a B-complex."



"Most American could probably benefit from taking up to three times or more of the RDA's for many of the B vitamins."



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