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UTM EatWell

Vitamin B₁₂

Vitamin B₁₂ protects the nervous system and is a crucial component of nerves, red blood cells and DNA. Without it, permanent nerve damage can result.

Signs of low vitamin B₁₂ include fatigue, sore tongue and numbness/ tingling in the hands or feet, or you may not notice any symptoms. Memory loss, irritability and depression may also indicate vitamin B₁₂ deficiency.

How much Vitamin B₁₂ do I need?

Both males & females age 14 or older need **2.4 micrograms (mcg)/day**

Note: Pregnant women age 19 or older need 2.6 micrograms/day and breastfeeding women age 19 or older need 2.8 micrograms/day

See **Food Sources of Vitamin B₁₂** to make sure you are getting enough every day. Your doctor or Registered Dietitian may suggest a supplement as well.

A note for Vegetarians about Vitamin B₁₂

It can be difficult to get enough **vitamin B₁₂** as a vegetarian, as there is very little of this vitamin in vegetables, fruits, nuts, beans or most grain products.

For you, milk and milk alternatives are important sources of this nutrient, as are simulated meat products like soy burgers (read the label).

A note for Vegans about Vitamin B₁₂

Having a reliable source of **vitamin B₁₂** is essential for a vegan because this important vitamin is only naturally-occurring in animal-based foods.

The only reliable vegan sources of B₁₂ are vitamin supplements OR foods fortified with B₁₂. All simulated meat products (e.g. veggie dogs, veggie burgers or similar) sold in Canada are fortified with vitamin B₁₂, as well as certain brands of milk alternatives and other soy products (read the label). One brand of nutritional yeast, "Red Star T6635 Vegetarian Support formula" is fortified and can provide extra vitamin B₁₂ as well.

Food Sources of Vitamin B12

| | Portion size | Vitamin B12 (mcg) |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Milk & Alternatives | | |
| Swiss/Emmental cheese | 50g (1 ½ oz) | 1.7 |
| Cottage cheese | 250mL (1 cup) | 1.5 |
| Plain yogurt | 200mL (¾ cup) | 1.3 |
| Milk (skim, 1%, 2% or 3.25%) | 250mL (1 cup) | 1.1 - 1.4 |
| Fortified almond or oat beverage | 250mL (1 cup) | 1.1 |
| Fortified soy or rice beverage | 250mL (1 cup) | 1.0 |
| Cheese (Feta, Gouda, Gruyere, Brie, Cheddar, Fontina) | 50g (1 ½ oz) | 0.8 - 0.9 |
| Meat & Alternatives | | |
| Clams | 75g (2 ½ oz) | 74.2 |
| Oysters | 75g (2 ½ oz) | 18.2 - 26.3 |
| Mussels | 75g (2 ½ oz) | 18.0 |
| Organ meat (liver, kidney, etc.) | 75g (2 ½ oz) | 14.0 - 64.3 |
| Herring | 75g (2 ½ oz) | 7.2 - 14.0 |
| Sardines, canned | 75g (2 ½ oz) | 6.8 |
| Salmon, canned | 75g (2 ½ oz) | 3.7 |
| Salmon, cooked | 75g (2 ½ oz) | 2.3 |
| Tuna, canned | 75g (2 ½ oz) | 2.2 |
| Soy burger | 75g (2 ½ oz) | 1.8 |
| Beef | 75g (2 ½ oz) | 1.3 - 2.5 |
| Pork | 75g (2 ½ oz) | 0.8 - 1.1 |
| Egg | 1 whole | 0.6 |
| Turkey | 75g (2 ½ oz) | 0.3 |
| Chicken | 75g (2 ½ oz) | 0.2 - 0.3 |
| Other | | |
| Red Star nutritional yeast | 2 g (1 tsp powder /2 tsp flaked) | 1.0 |



Need some FREE professional help?

The Health & Counselling Centre at UTM (Davis Building, Room 1123) has a **Registered Dietitian** who can assess your diet and help you make changes. Call (905) 828-5255 to make an appointment.