

## Vitamin B12-Rich Meals

The B complex vitamins consist of a group of compounds: B1 (thiamine), B2 (riboflavin), B3 (nicotinic acid), B6 (pyridoxine), B12 (cobalamin), and folate (folic acid). All these vitamins can be found in a wide variety of foods although the body requires only relatively small amounts of them, especially food rich in vitamin B1, B2, B3 and B12.

Foods abundant in vitamin B12 are very important because vitamin B12, along with B6, is a dominant contributing factor to the promotion of the body's metabolism of folic acid. Additionally, foods rich in vitamin B12 also have vital nutrients that play a range of important roles in countless activities, including cellular repair, the immune system, digestion, and the production of energy.

Foods rich in vitamin B12 are particularly important for fat and carbohydrate metabolism. As such, deficiency in vitamin B12 results in characteristics and symptoms that are very similar to disorders involving high or low levels of fats or carbohydrates in the body. Another possible result of not eating enough food rich in vitamin B12 is anemia, because vitamin B12 also plays a significant role in the metabolism of red blood cells.

Correction of deficiency simply involves increasing the amount of vitamin B12 that you consume. Treating underlying disorders that cause vitamin B12 deficiency in conjunction with the intake of vitamin B12 supplements is another method of correcting the deficiency. In addition, vitamin B12 supplementation appears to alleviate the symptoms of folic acid deficiency. This is, of course, assumed that folate supplements are also given to the patient. The reason for the folate supplements is that there may be unsuspected B12 deficiency along with the lack of folate, and the sudden availability of folate may use up the remaining B12, which is known to potentially be harmful to the nerves of the spinal cord.

### Sources in the Diet

The best foods rich in vitamin B12 looks to be animal products and yeast extracts. Nevertheless, there are also other sources that can be considered as food rich in vitamin B12. These include: red meat, wheat germ, bananas, fish, brown rice, dried dates and figs, cheese, nuts, dried apricots, eggs, asparagus, milk, potatoes, poultry, broccoli, spinach, wholegrain cereals, yeast extract (e.g. marmite), pulses, and yogurt.

Vegetables and plants are not thought of as foods rich in vitamin B12, with very little exception. Consequently, many vegetarians and especially vegans risk a deficiency in this vitamin. Vegetarians who consume eggs and dairy produce will obtain adequate B12 since these foods contain enough vitamin B12 to prevent deficiency. However, if these foods consumed, especially with regards to strict vegetarians or vegans, B12 supplements should be considered.