

Expert Explains Vitamin B12 Deficiency and Its Treatment

Health



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When to Get Tested for Vitamin B12 Levels

Vitamin B12, also known as cobalamin, is a vital water-soluble nutrient essential for the human body. It plays a crucial role in the formation of red blood cells, DNA synthesis, proper functioning of the nervous system, and energy metabolism. This information was shared by Dr. Sanjay Agrawal, scientific advisor at ALKOMEX GBN PHARMA GROUP, USA.

Different Forms of Vitamin B12 and Their Availability

According to Dr. Agrawal, Vitamin B12 exists in several forms such as cyanocobalamin, methylcobalamin, adenosylcobalamin, and hydroxocobalamin. These are available in various supplement formats including oral tablets, sublingual tablets, nasal sprays, and injections.

Importance of Vitamin B12 and Its Dietary Sources

Dr. Agrawal explained that Vitamin B12 is indispensable for maintaining a healthy nervous system and supporting cell growth. However, the human body cannot produce it on its own. It is mainly obtained from animal-based foods like liver, meat, eggs, and dairy products.

Common Symptoms of Vitamin B12 Deficiency

- Persistent fatigue and weakness
 - Yellowing of the skin
 - Loss of appetite
 - Tingling or numbness in hands and feet
 - Memory issues and mood changes
 - Difficulty in walking and coordination
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Diagnosis and Testing for Deficiency

Blood tests are conducted to measure serum B12 levels, methylmalonic acid (MMA), homocysteine, and holotranscobalamin (HoloTC). A serum B12 level below 150 pg/ml typically indicates a deficiency.

Treatment Approaches for Vitamin B12 Deficiency

Treatment includes dietary improvements alongside supplementation. Mild deficiencies can be managed with oral tablets, whereas severe cases may require B12 injections.

Safety and Importance of Medical Guidance

Vitamin B12 supplements are generally safe, although injections can sometimes cause mild side effects such as dizziness, itching, or nausea. Since Vitamin B12 is water-soluble, excessive intake usually does not cause toxicity as surplus amounts are excreted via urine. However, individuals with kidney problems should avoid high doses of cyanocobalamin and prefer methylcobalamin. Dr. Agrawal stresses the importance of consulting a healthcare professional before starting any supplementation to avoid unwanted effects.