

# Vitamins

**Vitamins** are essential to human life - in fact, that is the literal meaning of the word "vitamin". Vitamins are organic compounds necessary in small amounts in the diet for the normal growth and maintenance of life. They do not provide energy, nor do they construct or build any part of the body. Rather, they are needed for transforming food into energy and body maintenance, each vitamin performing one or more specific functions in the body.

As with minerals, it is important that your diet contains necessary vitamins that are in an optimal balance and in a usable form.

**Beta Carotene** (vegetable, Vitamin-A) is a substance which the body can change into vitamin A (retinol) when needed. It is a dietary essential nutrient that is necessary for the health of all body tissues. It keeps skin, eyes and inner linings of the body healthy and resistant to infection. Vitamin A is needed for growth, maintenance and repair of teeth, nails, hair, bones, glands and mucous membranes of the internal organs. Vitamin A also is essential for vision in dim light and improvement in high sensitivity to light and other eye maladies. Deficiencies can cause dry, rough skin that may become more susceptible to infection.

**Vitamin B1** (Thiamin) is water soluble, as are all in the B complex. Thiamin is required for normal digestion, growth, fertility, lactation, the normal functioning of nerve tissues and carbohydrate metabolism. Deficiency causes a malfunction of the nervous system. Other deficiency problems are: loss of appetite, body swelling (edema), heart problems, nausea, vomiting, and spastic muscle contractions throughout the body.

**Vitamin B2** (Riboflavin) helps the body obtain energy from carbohydrates and protein substances. Deficiency causes lip sores and cracks, as well as dimness of vision.

**Vitamin B6** (Pyridoxine) is involved mostly in the utilization of protein. As with other vitamins, B6 is essential for the proper growth and maintenance of body functions. Deficiency symptoms include mouth soreness, dizziness, nausea, weight loss, dermatitis and nervous disorders.

**Vitamin B12** (Cobalamin) is necessary for the normal development of red blood cells and the functioning of all cells, particularly in the bone marrow, nervous system and intestines. A deficiency causes pernicious anemia; if the deficiency is prolonged, a degeneration of the spinal cord occurs. B12 deficiencies are particularly dangerous for infants and consequently in pregnant or lactating mothers.

**Niacin** (B-Vitamin) is necessary for the healthy condition of all tissue cells. Deficiency is characterized by rough skin, mouth sores, diarrhea, and mental disorder. Niacin is one of the most stable of the vitamins, and the most easily obtained.

**Choline** (B-Vitamin) associates primarily with the utilization of fats and cholesterol in the body. It prevents fats from accumulating in the liver by moving it to the cells for their use. Choline has been found to be essential for the proper health of the liver and kidneys.

**Vitamin C** (Ascorbic Acid) this least stable of the vitamins promotes growth and tissue repair, including the healing of wounds. It aids in tooth and bone formation. When used as a food additive, vitamin C acts as a preservative. Lack of this vitamin causes scurvy. Deficiency signs are lassitude, weakness, bleeding, loss of weight and irritability. Early signs are bleeding and bruising easily.

**Pantothenic Acid** is needed to support a variety of body functions, including proper growth and maintenance and hormone production. A deficiency principally causes headache, fatigue, poor muscle coordination, nausea and cramps.

**Vitamin D** is found in people who spend part of their time in the sun. With exposure of the skin need no other source of vitamin D is needed, since it is formed in the skin by the ultraviolet rays. Foods fortified with vitamin D are primarily for infants and the elderly who lack exposure to sunlight.

Disclaimer: This database was developed purely for informational purposes only, and does not in any way purport to be a medical or prescriptive guide. Any reference to medicinal or a health benefit are not meant to treat or diagnose any problem and is not meant to replace professional medical advice and should not take the place of any prescribed medication that has been prescribed by a physician.

We suggest you always use caution when taking any herb or medication other than those prescribed or suggested by your physician. And if pregnant or nursing, again, please use caution. All herbs and medications should be kept out of the reach of children.