

Vitamin deficiency? Probably not!



Enough
vitamin D
and B12 from
your diet

A blood test is usually not required

Tiredness is rarely caused by a vitamin deficiency. If you eat healthily and get outdoors every day, your body can produce enough vitamin D. Most people also have plenty of vitamin B12 stored in their bodies, so no blood test is required in most cases. Some people may need to take vitamin D and take or inject vitamin B12 every day. This brochure provides all the details you need.

Vitamin D

Plenty from sunlight and nutrition

Vitamin D is important for the structure, growth and strength of your bones and teeth. Most people get enough vitamin D from sunlight and their diet.

Sunlight

When the sun shines on your skin, your body produces vitamin D — even when it's cloudy! However, it is important to keep your hands and face uncovered. The darker your skin, the less vitamin D you produce. As a result, people with darker skin are often unable to produce enough vitamin D. In elderly people, the body is also less capable of producing vitamin D.

If you get outdoors for half an hour a day and you eat healthily, you are getting enough vitamin D.



Nutrition

Vitamin D is mainly found in fatty fish, such as salmon or mackerel. Beef, cheese and eggs also contain a small amount of vitamin D. It is added to formula for babies, and also to (low-fat) margarine and cooking oils and fats. The product labels state the amount of vitamin D added.

Who needs to take extra vitamin D?

- * people who don't get outdoors often
- * people with a darker skin colour
- * women who wear a veil or burqa whenever they go out
- * pregnant women
- * children under the age of 4 (including babies who are bottle-fed or breastfed)
- * women over the age of 50
- * everyone over the age of 70

If you belong to one of these groups, you do not need a blood test.

Take 10 micrograms (400IE) of vitamin D every day. People over the age of 70 should take 20 micrograms (800IE) a day.

Take
vitamins
instead of
tests

vitamin
D

Too little vitamin D

Not enough vitamin D can cause problems with your bones. In children, this can lead to growth problems. Adults may experience osteoporosis. The symptoms are pain in the bones and muscles in your upper legs and hips, a waddling gait, difficulty getting up out of a chair and brittle bones.

Too much vitamin D

Too much vitamin D, however, is also not a good thing. If you take more than 100 micrograms per day, this can cause problems such as nausea, constipation, tiredness and a reduced appetite. Too much vitamin D can also damage your heart, kidneys and blood vessels. You won't experience these problems if you take up to 20 micrograms per day over a long period of time.

Vitamin B12

Enough from your diet

Your blood and nervous system need vitamin B12. Most people get enough vitamin B12 from their diet: meat, fish, milk, butter, quark, yoghurt, cheese and eggs all contain vitamin B12.

Symptoms of too little vitamin B12

A vitamin B12 deficiency can lead to neurological problems. Symptoms of these problems include a loss of sensation in your fingers and toes, a tingling feeling and balance issues. Anaemia, which causes you to feel tired and weak, can also result from a vitamin B12 deficiency. Anaemia generally develops later than any neurological symptoms.

If you eat animal products, you are getting enough vitamin B12. Meat, fish, milk, butter, quark, yoghurt, cheese and eggs all contain vitamin B12.



A blood test is usually not required.

You may develop a vitamin B12 deficiency if:

- * you take medicines, including certain stomach tablets for stomach problems or metformin for diabetes
- * you have chronic gastritis
- * you have a bowel condition, such as Crohn's disease
- * you frequently and excessively use laughing gas
- * you drink too much alcohol and eat too little on a daily basis

If you belong to one of these groups and you are experiencing symptoms, talk to your GP.

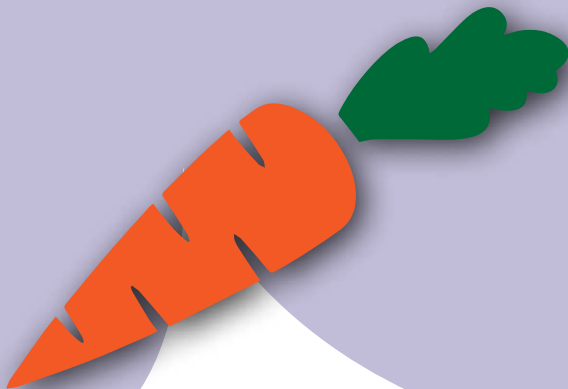
If your GP thinks you are not getting enough vitamin B12, a blood test will be arranged, or you will be asked to take vitamin B12 tablets for a trial period.

Your GP will only prescribe vitamin B12 injections if you have severe symptoms and your vitamin B12 deficiency can be proven.



Vegetarians and vegans

Vegetarians who eat dairy products and/or eggs every day are getting enough vitamin B12. Many plant-based meat alternatives also contain added vitamin B12. This can be found on the product label. If you are vegan and do not eat plant-based meat alternatives, you should take 2.8 micrograms of vitamin B12 every day.





Doen of laten? **More information**

More information about vitamin D and vitamin B12 can be found on thuisarts.nl and voedingscentrum.nl.