

B Complex Benefits and Beyond

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The B complex vitamins are the most underrated of all the nutritional supplements you will find on the shelves of your local health food store. They are far more important for the optimal functioning of the brain, spinal cord and nervous system than any other nutrient or herbal remedy. While glucosamine sulfate, chondroitin sulfate and shark's cartilage are grabbing the headlines in osteoarthritis reversal, we often forget that equally exciting (and less expensive) results can be achieved in osteoarthritis with high doses of several B vitamins, including niacinamide and vitamin B12. Did you know that the often overlooked B vitamin, biotin, can not only help prevent hair loss, fragile nails, and certain types of dermatitis but that it can also fight yeast or fungal infections?

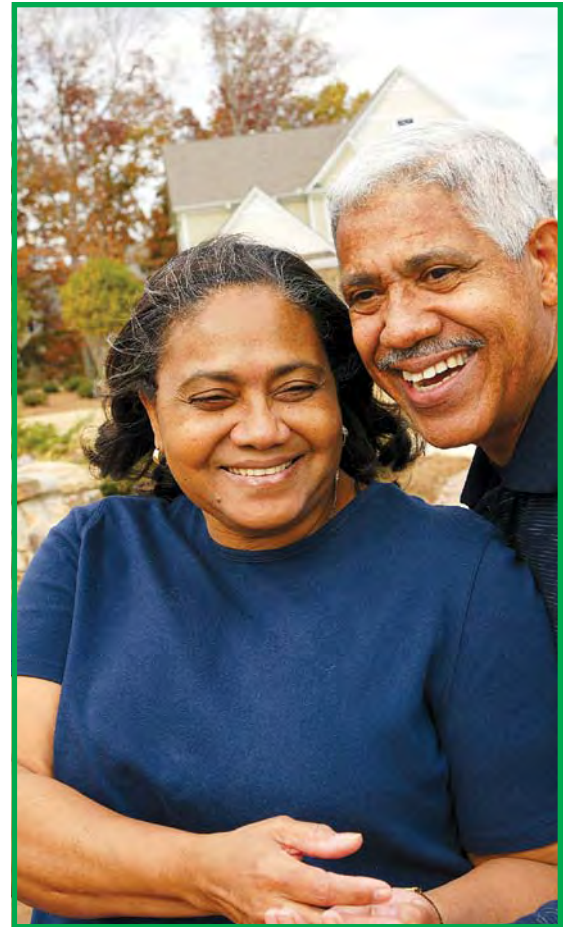
The B-complex vitamins are a group of similarly structured water-soluble compounds that are not stored in the body and must be supplied on a daily basis from the diet or through supplementation. They consist of B1 (thiamine), B2 (riboflavin), B3 (niacin, niacinamide), B5 (pantothenic acid), B6 (pyridoxine), B7 (biotin), B12 (cobalamin), and folic acid (B9, folate or folacin). Inositol and choline are often included as part of the B complex. The B-complex of vitamins is used in the proper formation of every cell in your body – particularly the heart, liver and nerve cells.

B-complex vitamin deficiencies occur far more easily and frequently than has been generally assumed, especially in people on weight loss diets, fasts, high daily intakes of sugar, refined and processed foods, as well as caffeine, saccharine and alcohol. People under stress or on a long list of medications, especially antibiotics, diuretics, chemotherapy, the birth control pill, hormone replacement therapy, etc, may be at high risk to develop B vitamin deficiencies.

B-complex vitamins are commonly found together in foods and have similar coenzyme (catalysts for enzyme reactions) functions, often needing each other to perform specific metabolic tasks. Some of the B vitamins (B12 and biotin) can also be made in the body by friendly microbes (bacteria, yeast, fungi, molds) in the large intestine. The majority of B vitamins, however, are obtained from food and then absorbed into the blood, mainly from the small intestine. If we consume too many B vitamins, the excess is excreted through the urine and the skin (perspiration). These excesses, with rare exceptions like B3 (niacin), are harmless and often helpful, especially for those suffering from various suboptimal mental processes.

B vitamins are vital for:

- Relief of moodiness, restlessness, irritability, insomnia and fatigue
- Health of the skin, bones, hair and muscle
- Brain cell function and health
- Intestinal health and bowel function
- Optimal blood sugar control
- Improved liver and cardiovascular system health
- Relief from skin problems, dry and itchy skin and rashes
- Relief from PMS, nausea, muscular weakness and sore or dry mouth and tongue.
- Health of mucosal membranes, particularly around the mouth



Scan this code with a QR reader app on your smartphone to watch the video “Sick of Feeling Sick and Tired?”



The B vitamins are found in many foods, occurring together, never in isolation. While the richest natural source of B vitamins is brewer's yeast or nutritional yeast, this is not an ideal food for many hypersensitive people. Other good sources of the B vitamins are the germ and bran of cereal grains, green vegetables, beans, peas, liver, most animal foods and nuts.

The B vitamins function primarily as coenzymes that catalyze many biochemical reactions in just about every cell in the body. They create energy by converting carbohydrates to glucose and also are important in fat and protein/amino acid metabolism. The B complex vitamins are very important for the normal functioning of the nervous system, via their anti-stress effects and energy boosting properties. The B vitamins are also vital for the general muscle tone of the gastrointestinal tract, which allows the bowels to function at their best.

B vitamin supplementation is best taken as a B-complex to relieve stress, fatigue, anxiety, nervousness, insomnia, and hyperactivity. Isolated B vitamin supplements may be therapeutically useful for conditions such as PMS (premenstrual syndrome), which can be helped by higher dosages of vitamin B6 (1000 mg or more daily) in addition to a balanced B-complex supplement. Similarly, high doses of B5 for adrenal stress and B1 for alcohol-induced organ damage are therapeutically helpful.

B vitamins for Anxiety and Depression

Practically all the B-complex vitamins are involved in treatment of anxiety and depression. The most important of these are B1, B3, B6, B12 and inositol. When using high doses of individual B vitamins, they must always be in conjunction with all the other B vitamins in relatively high doses to prevent or reduce side effects as well as deficiencies in those B vitamins not supplemented. For example, if using vitamin B1 in doses of 1000 mg daily, take a B complex of at least 100 mg of most of the other Bs at the same time.

- **B1 (Thiamine):** reduces or eliminates irritability, disordered thinking and mental confusion in otherwise healthy people. Clinically indicated in Alzheimer's disease, depression, insomnia, memory loss, alcoholism and all anxiety disorders.
- **B3 (Niacin):** is recommended for circulatory problems and lowering triglycerides and cholesterol. Niacinamide does not work in this fashion and is more applicable to anxiety, nervousness and irritability. Niacinamide is effective treatment for anxiety, insomnia, depression and other nervous system problems commonly seen in people who suffer from hypoglycemia and/or diabetes. Dementia, irritability, headaches, mental confusion, attention deficit disorder, hallucinations, amnesia, certain forms of schizophrenia and severe depression can all be signs or symptoms of B3 deficiency.
- **B6 (Pyridoxine):** is clinically effective in practically all anxiety and depression related psychiatric illnesses including anorexia nervosa, attention deficit disorder, autism, bipolar disorder, PMS, chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, hyperactivity and dementia. Caution should be taken as some reports of peripheral neuropathy (numbness, tingling, loss of sensation) have been reported with large doses of vitamin B6. Either lowering the dose of B6 or increasing relative doses of the other B-complex vitamins can reverse this.



- **B12 (Cobalamin):** The most spectacular benefits of B12 are seen with depression, chronic fatigue, memory loss, neuropathy and bipolar disorder. Although effective against anxiety, other B vitamins, especially B3 in high doses, appears to be most effective.
- **Inositol:** has been reported in recent psychiatric journals to be as effective as prescription anti-depressant and anti-anxiety drugs without the side effects. The powdered form is most effective but also the costliest (equivalent in price to most commonly prescribed anti-depressants). One side benefit in large doses is that it helps remove fat from the liver.

Turbo boost your B complex with Alpha Lipoic Acid

A good B complex should contain something called alpha lipoic acid. Alpha lipoic acid, is a potent antioxidant vitamin used by the mitochondria, the energy producing organelle of all cells in the body. Not only is alpha lipoic acid important for high energy but also it is a nutrient that helps control blood sugar levels by increasing insulin sensitivity, support cognitive function, optimize neurological function and prevent aging.

Your natural health care practitioner can recommend the right amounts of B complex and alpha lipoic acid for you to supplement but for most individuals, one or two capsules taken with each meal should be fine.

Report indicates that vitamins may decrease Lung Cancer Risk by 50%

A recent study of the effect of B vitamins on a large group of participants reported an inverse relationship between blood serum levels of vitamin B6, methionine and folate and the risk of lung cancer. High serum levels of vitamin B6, methionine and folate were associated with a 50% or greater reduction in lung cancer risk.

This exciting finding has not been widely reported in the media, but it confirms a growing body of evidence gathered over the last 40 years that B vitamins are important for preventing diseases such as cancer. Read the full article at: <http://orthomolecular.org/resources/omns/v07n13.shtml>.

Dr. Zoltan P. Rona practises Complementary Medicine in Toronto and is the medical editor of "The Encyclopedia of Natural Healing." He has also published several Canadian best-selling books, including "Return to The Joy of Health" and "Vitamin D - The Sunshine Vitamin." For more of his articles, see www.mydoctor.ca/drzoltanrona

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