

Food Sources of Vitamin B12

Information About Vitamin B12

- You need vitamin B12 to form DNA, make healthy blood cells and keep nerves working properly.
- Low levels of vitamin B12 can cause pernicious anemia. Vegetarians who eat no animal products and the elderly who absorb less vitamin B12 are most at risk.
- Vitamin B12 is found only in animal foods and fortified foods. People who avoid all animal products should look for meat alternatives, such as soy products fortified with vitamin B12.
- Ten to thirty percent of older people may not absorb vitamin B12 well. Health Canada advises adults over 50 years to consume foods fortified with vitamin B12 or a supplement containing vitamin B12.

How Much Do I Need?

Age in Years	Daily Vitamin B12 Needs micrograms (mcg)/day	Do Not Exceed
Men and Women 19 and older	2.4	An upper limit for vitamin B12 has not been established.
Pregnant Women 19 and older	2.6	
Breastfeeding Women 19 and older	2.8	

Vitamin B12 Content of Some Common Foods

The best sources of vitamin B12 include: eggs, milk, cheese, milk products, meat, fish, shellfish and poultry. Some soy and rice beverages as well as soy-based meat substitutes are fortified with vitamin B12. To see if a product contains vitamin B12 check the Nutrition Facts on the food label. The following table shows you which foods are sources of vitamin B12.

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Food	Serving size	Vitamin B12 (mcg)
Vegetables and Fruits	This food group contains very little of this nutrient.	
Grains Products	This food group contains very little of this nutrient.	
Milk and Alternatives		
<i>Milk</i>		
Skim	250 mL (1 cup)	1.37
1%, 2%, 3.3% homo	250 mL (1 cup)	1.13 - 1.19
Buttermilk	250 mL (1 cup)	0.96
Chocolate, 1%, 2%	250 mL (1 cup)	0.90
<i>Cheese</i>		
Cottage cheese	250 mL (1 cup)	1.50-1.70
Swiss/Emmental	50 g (1 ½ oz)	1.67
Feta	50 g (1 ½ oz)	0.87
Hard cheese, various types	50 g (1 ½ oz)	0.42-0.77
Fontina	50 g (1 ½ oz)	0.84
<i>Yogurt</i>		
Plain, 1 - 4% M.F.	175 mL (¾ cup)	0.99
Plain, greater than 4% M.F.	175 mL (¾ cup)	0.94
Fruit bottom, greater than 4% M.F.	175 mL (¾ cup)	0.91
Chocolate, non fat	175 mL (¾ cup)	0.88
<i>Milk Alternatives</i>		
Soy beverage, fortified	250 mL (1 cup)	1.04
Rice beverage, fortified	250 mL (1 cup)	1.0

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Meat and Alternatives		
<i>Organ Meat</i>		
Liver, beef, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	52.9
Liver, turkey, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	43.7
Giblets, turkey, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	24.9
Kidney, beef, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	18.7
Liver, chicken, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	15.9
<i>Poultry</i>		
Turkey, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	0.31
Duck, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	0.30
Chicken, breast, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	0.25
<i>Beef</i>		
Ground, regular, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	2.72
Rump roast, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	2.51
Sirloin steak, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	2.40
Ground, lean, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	2.36
<i>Pork</i>		
Pork, various cuts, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	0.52-0.90
Bacon, breakfast strips, cooked	3 slices (33 g)	0.60
Ground, lean, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	0.80
Ham, cured	75 g (2 ½ oz)	0.65
<i>Fish and Seafood</i>		
Clams, boiled	75 g (2 ½ oz)	74.7
Oysters, boiled	75 g (2 ½ oz)	18 -22

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Mussels, boiled	75 g (2 ½ oz)	18
Clam Fritter	75 g (2 ½ oz)	16.4
Mackerel, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	14.3
Herring, kippered	75 g (2 ½ oz)	14.2
Crab, Alaska King, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	8.62
Clam chowder, Manhattan, chunky	250 mL (1 cup)	8.37
Salmon, sockeye, red, raw or cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	3.75-4.35
Trout, rainbow, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	3.73
Salmon, pink, with bones, canned	75 g (2 ½ oz)	3.71
Salmon, Atlantic, wild, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	2.29
Tuna, light, canned in water	75 g (2 ½ oz)	2.24
Meat Alternatives		
Meatless, chicken, breaded	75 g (2 ½ oz)	3.83
Meatless, fish sticks	75 g (2 ½ oz)	3.15
Meatless, luncheon slices	75 g (2 ½ oz)	3.00
Meatless, weiner (frankfurter)	75 g (2 ½ oz)	1.76
Soy burger	75 g (2 ½ oz)	1.80
Egg	1 large	0.58
Fats and Oils	These foods contain very little of this nutrient.	
Other		
Red Star T6635+ Yeast (Vegetarian Support Formula)	2 grams (1 tsp powder or 2 tsp flaked)	1.0

Source: "Canadian Nutrient File 2007b", www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/fiche-nutri-data/index-eng.php [accessed Jan 2, 2009]

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