

VENICE PLASTIC SURGERY

A.E. HAAS, M.D.

Cosmetic, Reconstructive, Face, Breast, and Hand Surgery

Vitamins

Another water soluble vitamin is B 12. It was discovered by scientists named Riches and Folkers and others in the late 1940's. This vitamin is only available from animal products. Most meats, fish, shellfish, poultry and milk products as cheese are good sources of the vitamin. Fruits and vegetables are no source of B 12.

This fact is why humans are considered omnivorous, requiring both animal and plant sources for nutrition. Strict vegetarians will require supplements of this and other vitamins to remain in good health.

The vitamin is actually a group of slightly different but related chemicals. Two important ones are cyanocobalamin and methylcobalamin. Cyanocobalamin is my favorite to use as an example. It contains the cyanide group. One can say that cyanide is therefore a necessary substance in your body but obviously not too much. We all know that cyanide is a poison.

The action of B 12 is to participate in several body chemical reactions. When deficient there will be a type of anemia that develops. There is also nerve damage. Low levels may contribute to early coronary heart disease. The elderly, alcoholics and people with gastric and intestinal problems are most susceptible for deficiencies.

A deficiency is rare among young people with good varied diets. The vitamin is stored for years in the body and is eliminated in the stool not the urine as with other water soluble nutrients. If you decide to become a strict vegetarian it may take many years to show signs of the deficiency. This assumes you are not taking any vitamin supplements. Strict vegetarians should take vitamin supplements under the direction of a physician or nutritional expert.

Toxicity from taking large doses of the vitamin are virtually unknown. Taking excess B 12 has no beneficial effects that I can find. It may be safe to just take extra cobalamins but if you are not deficient then you will be wasting your money.

**The above represents the opinion of A. E. Haas, M.D.
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Just call us directly. No referral needed unless required by your insurance company

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