

The Plant-Based B12 Plan

For anyone eating mostly or entirely plants who has not yet sorted out vitamin B12. Every line below restates a claim verified against Tier-1 medical sources. Nothing here is invented, and nothing is for sale.

✓ CHECKED AGAINST HARVARD HEALTH PUBLISHING · NIH OFFICE OF DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS

1

Plants do not carry it

Harvard Health states vitamin B12 is available only in animal foods such as meat and dairy, or in yeast extracts. (Harvard Health)

2

Your liver hides the problem

Harvard notes the liver can store vitamin B12 for up to five years, which is why a dietary shortfall takes so long to surface. (Harvard Health)

3

The fix is cheap and standard

Harvard's prevention advice for vegans is direct: take adequate amounts of vitamin B12 supplements to make up for the shortage in the diet. (Harvard Health)

1. Understand why this one nutrient is different

It is not a plant-diet flaw. It is a sourcing fact.

WHY THIS WORKS

Harvard Health states vitamin B12 is available only in animal foods or yeast extracts, and that vegans can develop deficiency because they lack B12 in their diets. The NIH Office of Dietary Supplements adds that people on plant-based diets who do not consume enough fortified foods or supplements are at risk. Every other nutrient in a well-built plant diet has a plant source. This one does not.

SOURCE: HARVARD HEALTH PUBLISHING

DO THIS WEEK

- ☐ Accept that food alone will not cover B12 on a vegan diet
- ☐ Check which of your foods are B12-fortified
- ☐ Read the label on plant milks and cereals
- ☐ Do not rely on unfortified plant foods for B12

2. Know why you feel fine anyway

The delay is the trap.

WHY THIS WORKS

Harvard Health notes the liver can store vitamin B12 for up to five years, so a diet-related shortfall builds quietly. Harvard also says symptoms tend to develop slowly and may not be recognised immediately. Feeling fine in year one is not evidence that intake is adequate.

SOURCE: HARVARD HEALTH PUBLISHING

DO THIS WEEK

- ☐ Note the date you went plant-based
- ☐ Do not treat feeling fine as proof of adequacy
- ☐ Raise it at your next routine appointment
- ☐ Sort intake out before symptoms, not after

3. Recognise the signs, and get the blood test

This part belongs to your doctor, not to a label.

WHY THIS WORKS

Harvard lists weakness and fatigue, light-headedness, palpitations, shortness of breath, a sore red tongue, poor appetite and diarrhoea among the symptoms, and notes that prolonged low levels can cause numbness and tingling, difficulty walking, memory problems and nerve damage that may be permanent. Diagnosis is by blood test, including B12 and methylmalonic acid.

DO THIS WEEK

- ☐ Call your doctor about unexplained fatigue or palpitations
- ☐ Mention your diet plainly when you do
- ☐ Ask specifically about B12 and methylmalonic acid testing
- ☐ Do not self-diagnose from a symptom list

4. Cover the gap the boring way

A daily B12 source, food or capsule, from here on.

WHY THIS WORKS

Harvard's stated prevention advice for vegans is to take adequate amounts of vitamin B12 supplements to make up for the dietary shortage. Fortified foods do the same job when eaten consistently. The choice between them is about which one you will actually keep doing, and both are inexpensive.

SOURCE: HARVARD HEALTH PUBLISHING

DO THIS WEEK

- ☐ Choose fortified foods, a supplement, or both
- ☐ Look for a stated B12 amount, not a blend
- ☐ Take it daily rather than occasionally
- ☐ Re-check with your clinician if symptoms appear

EVERY CLAIM ABOVE, TRACED TO ITS SOURCE

Harvard Health Publishing, Vitamin B12 deficiency · <https://www.health.harvard.edu/preventive-care/vitamin-b12-deficiency-a-to-z>
NIH Office of Dietary Supplements, Vitamin B12 Fact Sheet for Health Professionals · <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/VitaminB12-HealthProfessional/>

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