

The B12 Checklist

What a normal result misses, and the test that settles it.

2.4

MCG · THE ADULT DAILY
VITAMIN B12 TARGET

1 Know what a normal B12 result misses

A normal number and enough B12 are not the same

- ☐ NHLBI: a blood level of **400 pg/mL or higher** reads normal, **200 or lower** reads deficient.
- ☐ Your body stores **1,000 to 2,000 times** a day's worth, so symptoms can take years to appear.
- ☐ NHLBI states plainly that you may still have the deficiency even when your level reads normal.
- ☐ Nerve symptoms can start before the blood count changes, so do not wait for anemia to show.

Write your actual number and the lab's reference range on this sheet. A result near the bottom of normal is worth a second look, not a shrug.

2 Ask for the one test that settles it

One follow-up test separates fine from deficient

- ☐ Ask for the **methylmalonic acid (MMA)** test, blood or urine. B12 clears MMA; too little B12 lets it build up.
- ☐ A **homocysteine** test is often read alongside MMA to help your provider interpret the result.
- ☐ MedlinePlus: high MMA can signal B12 deficiency, and it is the test most often used to diagnose it.
- ☐ Bring your B12 number with you. MMA answers the question the B12 number alone cannot.

3 Fix the reason you are not absorbing it

Absorption fails before intake does after fifty

- ☐ Food B12 must be freed by stomach acid first. Many older adults no longer make enough acid.
- ☐ Flag these with your provider: **metformin**, heartburn and reflux drugs, heavy alcohol use.
- ☐ ODS: people over 50 should get most of their B12 from **fortified foods or a supplement**.
- ☐ Stomach or intestinal surgery, celiac disease and Crohn's disease all reduce how much you absorb.

4 Choose a B12 you will actually take

The form matters less than taking it every day

- ☐ ODS: research has **not** shown any one form of supplemental B12 to be better than the others.
- ☐ B12 does not add energy if you already get enough. Fix a shortfall; do not chase a lift.
- ☐ Doses far above the daily target are common and are considered safe; your body keeps only a little.
- ☐ Pick one bottle, one time of day, and keep it beside something you already do daily.

THE ONE WE POINT TO

MegaFood Methyl B12

Methylated B12 with folate and B6 in one small daily tablet, about 42 cents a day.

Shop the bottle →

[Link works right from this PDF](#)