



**HEPFDC NUTRITION PROGRAMS**  
**The Importance of B12 Supplements**

See [Illustration 38 A](#) & [Illustration 38B](#) and the corresponding HEPFDC Handbook lessons for WHO evidence-based guidelines in all available languages on the [DOWNLOAD FREE](#) page.

**The Importance of B12 Supplements:** The *only* downside we have been able to find to a strict vegetarian diet, especially those that include much processed, fast and other “junk foods.” This is also very important for *all* people over the age of 50, *regardless of their type of diet.*

As reported in Lesson 38B:

**B12 deficiency** can present with many different symptoms and has several different causes. The CDC reports that it is often undiagnosed and untreated, especially in the elderly.

–Although most cases of deficiency occur in people over 50, many others, such as those on antacids or a strict vegetarian diet, are also at increased risk.

–This is especially important where water has been treated to destroy bacteria (All B12 originates from bacteria which are destroyed along with deadly bacteria by safe water treatments). Animals get their B12 from untreated sources, which unfortunately, are also among the causes of deadly zoonosis (diseases transmitted from animals to people).

–As B12 is often not well absorbed, especially in the elderly, the CDC recommends that all adults over 50 years (regardless of type of diet) take a vitamin supplement or fortified food source of B12. For the elderly, much higher doses than are found in multivitamins (for example, 1000 micrograms cobalamin/day) are often recommended.

–In nearly all cases, vitamin and mineral supplements are never as good as obtaining them from fruits and vegetables, and taking too much of a supplement can also be harmful. Ask your doctor or Ministry of Health for supplement recommendations for your area.

–If your vitamin or other dietary supplements are made in the US, to ensure quality and safety, it is important that the label always include a “USP”, “CL” or “NSF” certification logo (See Lesson 28).

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