

Vitamin B12 And Winter

With autumn and winter just around the corner it's that time of year when many people notice a drop in their mood, immunity and energy levels.

While a healthy diet and regular exercise are both good ways to enhance health and wellbeing, many people forget to delve into the fundamental reasons as to why they may be feeling this way. Ensuring that vitamin levels, especially vitamin B12 levels, are optimised is key.



What Does Vitamin B12 Do?

Vitamins enable your body to function most effectively. There are 13 vitamins that are absolutely vital for health, and vitamin B12 is one of these.

Vitamin B12 helps your body convert food into glucose: a useable energy source. If your vitamin B12 levels are low, you may produce less energy and therefore feel more fatigued. Furthermore, vitamin B12 (with iron) is used to make red blood cells. Not having enough B12 therefore reduces the number of red blood cells and thus the total amount of oxygen you can carry around your body. When oxygen levels are reduced this too makes you feel tired.

Vitamin B12 is also vital for immune function. Studies have shown that vitamin B12 boosts the speed at which the cytokine network and white blood cells (our immune cells) tackle illnesses and infections. Consequently, a sub-optimal level of vitamin B12 may be making you more prone to those pesky colds, as well as more generally struggling to fight off infections.

Additionally, a lack of vitamin B12 has been linked to mental health concerns including depression and anxiety. Supplementing vitamin B12 may therefore help to beat those winter blues or the more serious Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD).

With our modern day hectic lifestyles it's very easy to inadvertently miss out on not getting enough vitamins. For example if you have reduced your red meat intake you will likely have reduced your vitamin B12 intake. This reduction in dietary B12 is perpetuated by the fact that stress, alcohol, and medications (which most of us have to some degree!) reduce your ability to absorb vitamin B12 from your stomach. This can then become a catch-22 situation leaving you feeling rotten!

So... If you are bored of feeling lethargic, low or getting every cold going around then some extra B12 may do you a turn!