

B12 - one man's story - could this be you too?

I could have written an article for you like this - but this recent one by Dr Micozzi is so well put I thought you should all read it. I quite often get similar stories from polio survivors and others in their families. Take heed. Your doctor won't necessarily realise the significance. Blood levels don't tell the whole story. Tessa Jupp RN Polio Clinic WA.

"I heard an interesting story recently from a colleague about a man whom I'll call Bill.

One night, while watching TV, Bill began to feel nauseated, sweaty, and out of breath. He could feel his heart racing.

Suddenly, his legs began to shake and jerk. Bill rushed to the ER, where he told doctors he had not really felt right for about a year. He'd been **dizzy (hint 1)**, **tired (hint 2)**, and **depressed (hint 3)**. And in the previous two weeks, he had begun to **feel off balance when he was standing (hint 4)**.

Doctors did find that Bill's blood pressure dropped when he stood up. But they didn't take on board any of the other hints, and sent him home with no answers and no help.

Bill figured that these seemingly unconnected health issues were due to aging and he would just have to live with them. But within a few days, the problems started all over again and he went back to the ER.

This time, doctors observed that Bill walked with an **abnormal, flat-footed gait (major hint 5)**, which could be a sign of a neurological disorder like multiple sclerosis or Parkinson's disease. However, tests for both of these conditions came back normal.

Finally, the doctors did a basic physical exam (when all else fails, examine the patient). They discovered that Bill had impaired sensation in his feet and that he couldn't feel the floor when he was standing. These findings are consistent with peripheral neuropathy - a condition often caused by diabetes. Excess sugar in the blood slowly damages the small blood vessels that supply peripheral nerves in the hands and feet.

But Bill didn't have diabetes. Nor did he have a circulatory problem or a degenerative nerve disease. Finally, after ruling out everything else, doctors concluded that Bill had a simple deficiency of vitamin B12. Correcting it completely cured his neuropathy. And boosting his intake of all B vitamins helped with his dizziness, fatigue and depression.

Why you probably aren't getting enough essential "neuro-vitamins"

This sounds simple, right? Scientists have long known that B vitamins are important for every cell in the body. And the effects of B vitamins on brain and nerve tissue are so well-established that in Europe they call them "*neuro-vitamins*." In particular, insufficient B12 can first manifest in sensitive nerve cells, which may lead to peripheral neuropathy.

But despite all of this knowledge, Bill's case is not rare. In the famous Framingham Heart Study, researchers found that 39% of the nearly 3,000 subjects had B12 levels in the low-normal range. More than 16% had below normal levels,

and 9% had outright deficiency.

All this in the "*well-nourished*" USA, protected by the government's so-called "*experts*" on nutrients - and dosages.

Normally, B12 comes from the diet, but the best sources are eggs, meat, and dairy - foods we've all been told to avoid. Yet even if you (wisely) ignore the pseudo-science and eat these healthy foods, research shows that about 10% - 30% of all people over age 50 may still have trouble digesting vitamin B12.



Why? First of all, you need a healthy gastrointestinal tract to absorb B12 into your bloodstream. Gastrointestinal surgery can interfere with B12 absorption, as can IBS and other bowel disorders.

Stomach acids help the body absorb B12, so beware of medications that reduce these acids. A recent study of nearly 210,000 adults found that the people who took proton-pump inhibitor drugs like **Losec**, **Nexium**, **Somac**, **Zantac** and **Pariet** for two years had a 65% increase in vitamin B12 deficiency. Other types of antacids - most notably, **Tagamet** and **Pepcid** - increased B12 deficiency by 25%.

But stomach acid-suppressing drugs aren't the only pharmaceuticals that can hamper

B12 absorption. A common example is **Metformin**, an otherwise safe and effective drug for diabetes. That's why I recommend that everyone who takes Metformin also take a vitamin B-complex supplement.

Statins are another culprit. I've warned how these overused anti-cholesterol drugs can cause serious side effects - and one of those is neuropathy.

So what have we learned from Bill's story? First of all, that there is plenty of research showing that vitamins and dietary supplements promote health, prevent illness, and reduce the risk of chronic diseases. But whenever people speak about the ability of vitamins to actually "*cure*" medical conditions like neuropathy, it is often in hushed tones.

You see, supplement manufacturers are actually not permitted to tell consumers about the health benefits of dietary supplements because of the FDA's bureaucratic regulations designed to "*protect*" consumers from false claims. Unfortunately, these laws also prevent companies from making claims that are 100% true. Unfortunately, all too often drugs only mask the symptoms that the body uses to tell you something is wrong. Drugs generally don't address the root causes of those symptoms. Furthermore, drugs often *cause* side effects of their own.

Ironically, these side effects frequently result from a drug interfering with the body's absorption and utilization of critical vitamins and other nutrients.

by Dr Marc Micozzi "Insider Cures" Sept 2014 Vol 3: 9