

## Vitamin B12 for Hair Growth



Being able to grow long, luxurious locks requires more than just having the right genes or using the right conditioner. Your body won't be able to produce a healthy head of hair without having access to the proper amounts of certain vitamins, including vitamin B12. Learning the facts about vitamin B12 and hair growth can give you a new appreciation for the role diet plays in your hair health.

### **The Facts**

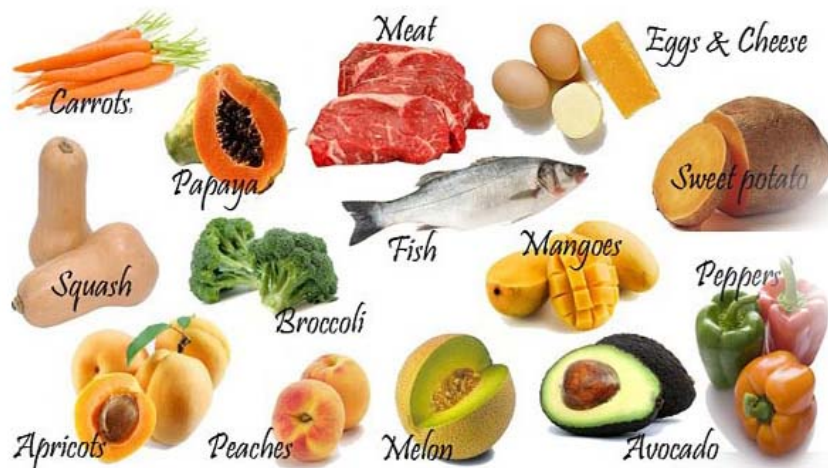
A vitamin that dissolves in water, vitamin B12--also called cobalamin--plays a key role in metabolism. A member of the complex B group of vitamins, this water-soluble vitamin aids in the formation of red blood cells and helps your body's central nervous system function correctly. While your body generally can't store excess amounts of most water-soluble vitamins, vitamin B12 can remain in your body indefinitely, stored in your liver.

### **Significance**

Vitamin B12 promotes healthy hair growth by helping in the formation of red blood cells. The visible part of your hair — the shaft — is composed primary of keratin, a fibrous form of protein.

At the base of each hair follicle, tiny blood vessels connect to the root of each hair strand. Red blood cells serve the purpose of carrying oxygen to the living portion of the hair strands. Without adequate oxygen, your hair typically won't be able to sustain healthy growth.

## Types



Look no further than the meat and dairy sections of your supermarket to promote hair growth by boosting your daily intake of vitamin B12. Common food sources of vitamin B12 include various animal products, such as eggs, meat, milk and dairy products, shellfish, oysters and poultry.

Natural supplement sources for vitamin B12 include beef liver and brewer's yeast. If you're a strict vegetarian or vegan and don't eat dairy products or eggs, then consider talking to your doctor about the possibility of taking a vitamin B12 supplement.

## Problems

Regardless of how much meat you eat, vitamin B12 won't be able to enhance hair growth if your body isn't able to use the vitamin properly. Pernicious anemia is a condition that occurs when your body becomes unable to absorb vitamin B12 in the intestines.

Proper absorption of vitamin B12 requires your body to produce

and release adequate levels of a special protein called intrinsic factor in your stomach. Without this ability, your body becomes anemic, potentially producing multiple symptoms, including fatigue, pale skin, shortness of breath, diarrhea, nerve damage and hair problems.

### **Considerations**

As a member of the complex B family of vitamins, vitamin B12 doesn't operate alone when contributing to a lush head of healthy hair. A deficiency of any of the B vitamins could potentially keep the rest of the group from performing their proper functions. You'll see the end result of this vitamin deficiency in the form of weak or brittle hair shafts and stunted hair growth.

Maximize your chances of experiencing healthy hair growth by ensuring that you consume a well-balanced diet that includes foods rich in each of the eight complex B vitamins.