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*New research links higher B vitamin intakes to a decrease in symptoms of depression in older adults.*

## LOW B-VITAMIN INTAKES CORRELATE WITH DEPRESSION IN OLDER ADULTS

Low intakes of the B vitamins are thought to contribute to depression in some people, but until now there has been little supporting evidence from population-based studies of older adults.

In a recent study published online in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, researchers examined whether certain dietary intakes of vitamin B6, vitamin B12, and folic acid correlated with symptoms of depression.

The study group consisted of 3,503 adults aged 65 and older who were followed over an average of 7.2 years. Vitamin intakes from diet and supplements were assessed using food frequency questionnaires, and the presence of depression was measured periodically using a standardized version of the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression scale.

After  $\leq 12$  years of follow-up, higher B vitamin intakes (including supplementation) were associated with a lower risk of depressive symptoms. The lowered risk remained after adjusting for age, sex, race, education, income, and anti-depressant medication use. The risk of developing depression symptoms decreased by 2 percent for every 10mg (milligram) increase in daily vitamin B6 intake. The same effect was true for every 10 $\mu$ g (microgram) increase in vitamin B12 intake. Increased intakes of the B vitamins through food intake alone did not significantly reduce depression incidence.

Both vitamin B6 and vitamin B12 are involved in healthy nervous system function, but because older adults often have difficulty absorbing the B12 found naturally in food, fortified foods and a multivitamin may be necessary to reach beneficial levels.

The results of this research indicate that high total intakes of vitamins B6 and B12 may be protective against depressive symptoms in older adults.

*Skarupski KA, et al. Longitudinal association of vitamin B6, folate, and vitamin B12 with depressive symptoms among older adults over time. AJCN ePub ahead of print, doi:10.3945/ajcn.2010.29413. Retrieved online June 2, 2010.*