

Cyanocobalamin – Vitamin B12

October 2019

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|  fish |  soy beans |  fortified cereals |  shellfish |
|  eggs | sources of vitamin B12 | |  silken tofu |
|  red meat | | |  low fat dairy |
|  poultry |  liver |  crustaceans |  cheese |

Routine screening for B12 deficiency in the absence of specific symptoms should not be undertaken.

Absolute indications for measuring vitamin B12 levels are:

1. Unexplained anaemia
2. Neurological signs or cognitive impairment
3. Post gastric and bariatric surgery
4. Failure to thrive, movement disorders and developmental delay in infants
5. Objective evidence of B12 deficiency – glossitis

Many non-specific symptoms may be caused by B12 deficiency, including tiredness and fatigue, however, B12 assessment should only be conducted following extensive investigation and exclusion of other possible causes.

Current clinical practice within the UK is to treat cobalamin deficiency with **intramuscular hydroxocobalamin**. **Locally, across the East Lancashire Health Economy, cyanocobalamin tablets are BLACK traffic light.**

For suspected B12 deficiency of dietary origin, patients should be given dietary advice about foods that are a good source of vitamin B12 e.g. eggs, meat, milk and other dairy products, salmon or cod, or foods such as breakfast cereal or bread which have been fortified with vitamin B12. Where improvement to diet is not enough or not possible (e.g. vegan) a multi-vitamin containing B12 (readily available from supermarkets at an approximate cost of £1 for 2 month supply) or **OTC** oral cyanocobalamin 50-150microgram daily can be recommended for the patient to purchase. **Patients with dietary B12 deficiency e.g. vegan diet should not be prescribed oral cyanocobalamin on prescription.**

- Serum B12 tests are not recommended in patients who have non-specific symptoms or are tired all the time.
- Individuals with dietary related B12 deficiency e.g. vegan diet, should be given information on dietary sources of vitamin B12 and if appropriate, advised to purchase an OTC multi-vitamin or a supplement containing B12.
- Cyanocobalamin tablets should not be prescribed and are BLACK traffic light.

For further information, please contact the Medicines Management Team on
01254 282087 (BwD CCG) or 01282 644807 (EL CCG)