

## TREATMENT BULLETIN

If you are having any problems receiving replacement therapy vitamin B<sub>12</sub> please use the following as a basis for discussing this with your doctor.

1. If you have been diagnosed as having Pernicious Anaemia then you will need replacement therapy injection **for life**:

*Patients suspected of having pernicious anaemia should be tested for intrinsic factor antibody. Patients found to be positive should have lifelong therapy with cobalamin<sup>1</sup>.*

2. You can have Pernicious Anaemia even if you do **not** have Intrinsic Factor Antibodies: *Patients negative for intrinsic factor antibody, with no other causes of deficiency, may still have pernicious anaemia and should be treated as anti-intrinsic factor antibody negative pernicious anaemia. Lifelong therapy should be continued in the presence of an objective clinical response<sup>2</sup>.*

3. You cannot 'overdose' on vitamin B<sub>12</sub><sup>3</sup> - it's a water soluble vitamin and any excess is excreted in urine.

4. Although injections of vitamin B<sub>12</sub> is available only on prescription in the UK it is widely available 'over the counter' in pharmacies in mainland Europe.

5. Quite potent sub-lingual sprays, nasal sprays, nasal drops, skin patches and sub-lingual lozenges are widely available in health food stores and on the internet. Your doctor may want to consider using these although the efficacy of these alternative treatments has not been subject to rigorous evaluation.

6. Some patients require high levels of serum B<sub>12</sub> to feel well while others do not. We don't know why this is so but it could be due to gut bacteria, the functionality of cell receptors or problems with the Methylation cycle.

END OF BULLETIN

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<sup>1</sup> Guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of Cobalamin and Folate disorders: British Committee for Standards in Haematology, June 2014; Devalia, V et al

<sup>2</sup> IBID

<sup>3</sup> Institute Of Medicine (Us) Standing Committee on the Scientific Evaluation Of Dietary Reference Intakes And Its Panel On Folate, Other B Vitamins (1998). "Dietary Reference Intakes: Thiamin, Riboflavin, Niacin, Vitamin B6, Folate, Vitamin B12, Pantothenic Acid, Biotin, and Choline". Food and Nutrition Board, Institute of Medicine (Washington, DC: National Academy Press). ISBN 0-309-06554-2.