

THE AUSTRALIAN VEGAN STUDY

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VITAMIN B12 INTAKE OF VEGAN WOMEN AGED 18-44 YEARS*

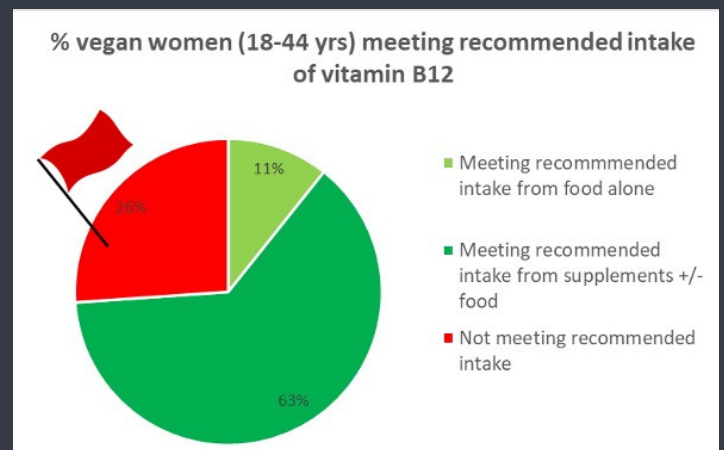
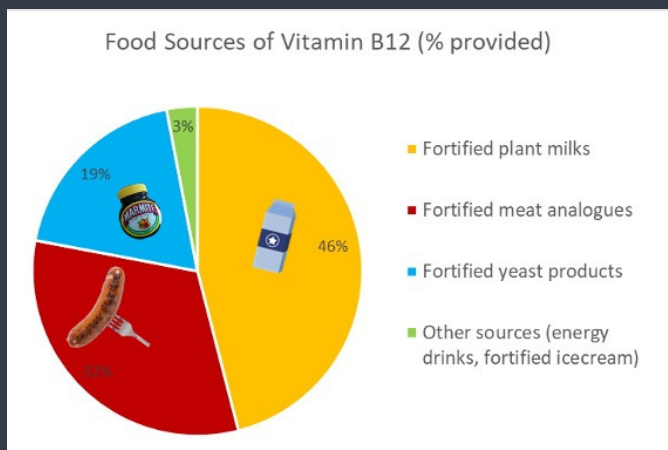
Why this was investigated

Vitamin B12 is of particular relevance to people on vegan and other plant-based diets, as food sources naturally containing the vitamin are almost exclusively animal-derived. Studies on vitamin B12 status have found a higher prevalence of vitamin B12 deficiency in not only vegans but also in vegetarians than in omnivores, with vegans and those not taking supplements most at risk of deficiency*.

What was done

Data from 1,530 women aged 18-44 years on a vegan diet was collected via an online survey. Information was obtained on their demographic and health characteristics as well as their intake of vitamin B12. Intake of vitamin B12 was estimated using a food frequency questionnaire and questions on intake from supplements. Average total intake over the past 3 months was calculated.

Vitamin B12 deficiency can result in **SERIOUS BLOOD AND NERVOUS SYSTEM DYSFUNCTION**, and in infants can result in **FAILURE TO THRIVE, DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY AND LONG-TERM PHYSICAL AND INTELLECTUAL IMPAIRMENT, EVEN DEATH***.



THE AUTHORS CONCLUDED:

- *"The **vitamin B12** intakes of a substantial proportion of Australian women of reproductive age consuming a vegan diet **DO NOT MEET THE RECOMMENDED INTAKE**, which could adversely affect their health, and, if they are pregnant or lactating, that of their infants too".*
- *"There is a need for further research in this area to identify effective strategies to address this situation."*

*Benham, A. J., Gallegos, D., Hanna, K. L., & Hannan-Jones, M. T. (2021). Intake of vitamin B12 and other characteristics of women of reproductive age on a vegan diet in Australia. *Public Health Nutrition*, 1–11.