MEET THE FAMILY

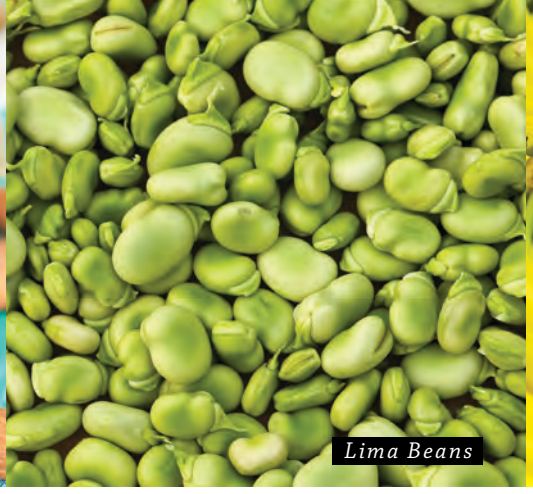
THERE'S A BIG CREW OF B VITAMINS, AND ALL OF THEM ARE CRUCIAL TO HEALTH.

Vitamin B, often referred to as the B-complex, is the biggest and most varied family of vitamins. It also comes off sometimes as—dare we say it?—a little dull. It has an unheralded-workhorse reputation attached to it, without the research sizzle that surrounds nutrients such as, say, vitamin D.

But just because vitamin B isn't constantly under the media spotlight doesn't make it insignificant. In fact, life as we know it would come to a screeching halt without this big family of interrelated compounds that play roles in everything from energy production to brain health.

The most notable sign of overall B depletion is fatigue. But low levels of specific Bs can produce all sorts of symptoms, including mood problems.


Almonds


Lima Beans


Bananas

NAME	GOOD SOURCES
Biotin (B7)	Almonds, carrots, eggs, oats, onions, peanuts, salmon, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, walnuts
Choline*	Beef, chicken, cod, collard greens, eggs, salmon, scallops, shrimp, tuna, turkey
Cobalamin (B12)	Beef, cod, cow's milk, lamb, salmon, sardines, scallops, shrimp, tuna, yogurt
Folic Acid (B9)	Asparagus, beans (dried), broccoli, lentils, spinach, turnip greens
Inositol*	Beans (dried), blackberries, bran flakes, cherries (dark), kiwis, limes, oranges, prunes, rutabagas, stone-ground wheat
Niacin (B3)	Beef, brown rice, chicken, lamb, peanuts, salmon, sardines, shrimp, tuna, turkey
PABA*	Brewer's yeast, molasses, organ meats, wheat germ; smaller amounts in bran, mushrooms, spinach
Pantothenic Acid (B5)	Avocados, broccoli, chicken, lentils, mushrooms (crimini and shiitake), peas (dried), sweet potatoes, turkey, yogurt
Pyridoxine (B6)	Bananas, beef, chicken, potatoes, salmon, spinach, sunflower seeds, sweet potatoes, tuna, turkey
Riboflavin (B2)	Almonds, asparagus, beet greens, soybeans, spinach, turkey, yogurt
Thiamine (B1)	Barley, beans and peas (dried), lentils, lima beans, oats, sunflower seeds

*A vitamin-like compound related to the B-complex.


Avocados


Peanuts


Asparagus

WHAT IT DOES

Promotes the activity of *enzymes*, substances that help speed up biochemical reactions; plays a role in maintaining healthy blood sugar balance; often taken to strengthen nails and hair
Needed for healthy cell membranes; linked to better memory and focus; has been identified as a nutrient many Americans have suboptimal levels of
Works with folic acid and pyridoxine to reduce levels of a harmful substance called *homocystine*; crucial for brain health; age can lower absorption; vegan diets often provide inadequate amounts
Long recommended during pregnancy to reduce birth defect risk; supports red blood cell creation and cardiovascular health; smoking and excessive alcohol intake linked to low levels
Deficiencies have been linked to depression; plays a role in glucose metabolism; may help women with polycystic ovary syndrome
Promotes energy production by converting carbs, fats and proteins into usable forms; can reduce cholesterol when used in practitioner-supervised dosages
Aids in red blood cell formation; helps the body utilize amino acids; crucial for healthy skin and hair pigmentation; supports intestinal health
Required to create *coenzyme A*, which is essential for energy production; plays a vital role in the body's usage of fats
Supports brain and liver health; needed for red blood cell production; promotes proper carb metabolism; deficiency has been linked to cognitive difficulties
Acts as an *antioxidant* by fighting cell-damaging molecules called *free radicals*; required for proper iron metabolism; promotes energy production
Supports nervous system health; plays a role in energy generation; levels tend to be low in people with diabetes; can be destroyed by food processing; excessive alcohol intake linked to deficiency

NOTE: Always consult with your healthcare practitioner for help in designing a supplementation program, especially if you have a pre-existing condition.