

# 17 of every 20 people in 20-40 age group have **vitamin deficiency**

**ALARMING** Results of a 3-year-long study reveal pervasively low levels of important vitamins D, B12 and B9

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**MUMBAI:** Vitamin deficiency caused by deprivation of sunlight and faulty eating habits could be the reason behind chronic exhaustion, anxiety and mood swings. A three-year-long study has revealed that 17 out of every 20 men and women in the age group of 20-40 years suffer from deficiency of vitamin D, vitamin B12 and B9 (folic acid).

The study, conducted by the Metropolis Healthcare Limited chain of laboratories, looked at close to 75,000 samples of women in the age group of 20-40 years and found that nearly 83% suffered from vitamin D deficiency; almost 85% of nearly 30,000 samples from men were found to have vitamin D deficiency. Vitamin D is essential for strong bones, helping the body absorb calcium from the diet.

While it is known that sunlight is the best source of vitamin D, also known as sunshine vitamin, its deficiency, experts said, is common and Indians are more prone, given their skin colour. "Our darker skin colour means we have high levels of the pigment melanin which acts as a natural sunscreen, preventing absorption of the vitamin," said Dr Kiran Coelho, a gynaecologist.

## KNOW YOUR VITAMINS

### VITAMIN D

**Symptoms like bone pain and muscle weakness, mood swings, fatigue can mean vitamin D deficiency.** The best source for vitamin D is sunlight.

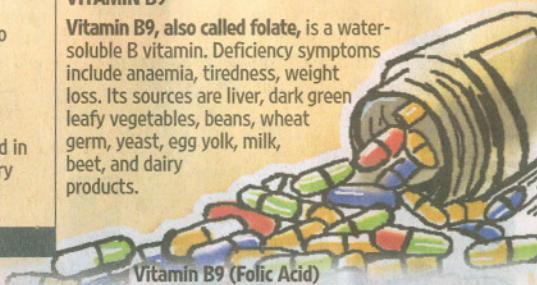
Vitamin D can also be obtained from oral medicines and injections under a doctor's guidance. Foods like milk, eggs, fish and fruit juices are rich sources of the vitamin.

### VITAMIN B12

**Vitamin B12 deficiency can lead to psychological and neurological problems such as depression and Alzheimer's, apart from anaemia.** Vegetarians have relatively lower vitamin B12 levels. It can be found in foods such as meat, sea food, dairy products, eggs.

### VITAMIN B9

**Vitamin B9, also called folate, is a water-soluble B vitamin.** Deficiency symptoms include anaemia, tiredness, weight loss. Its sources are liver, dark green leafy vegetables, beans, wheat germ, yeast, egg yolk, milk, beet, and dairy products.



## RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Vitamin D			Vitamin B12			Vitamin B9 (Folic Acid)		
Age Group	Deficient	Sufficient	Age Group	Deficient	Sufficient	Age Group	Deficient	Sufficient
<b>Women</b>			<b>Women</b>			<b>Women</b>		
20 to 30 yrs	25919	4683	20 to 30 yrs	2519	15501	20 to 30 yrs	578	931
30 to 40 yrs	35792	8064	30 to 40 yrs	3579	21824	30 to 40 yrs	667	944
Total	61711	12747	Total	6098	37325	Total	1245	1875
<b>Men</b>			<b>Men</b>			<b>Men</b>		
20 to 30 yrs	10065	1578	20 to 30 yrs	1886	6319	20 to 30 yrs	261	436
30 to 40 yrs	15631	2723	30 to 40 yrs	2883	9862	30 to 40 yrs	383	605
Total	25696	4301	Total	4769	16181	Total	644	1041
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>87407</b>	<b>17048</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>10867</b>	<b>53506</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1889</b>	<b>2918</b>

The study also revealed an alarming trend in deficiency of vitamins B12 and B9. It was found that of all the samples with vitamin B9 deficiency, 66% were women and the rest were men. Vitamin B9, B12 and other B vitamins play an impor-

tant role in producing DNA, red blood cells and brain chemicals that affect mood and other brain functions.

"The lack of Vitamin D and B12 is known as dual deficiency. And women, especially those in the reproductive age, are prone

to dual deficiency for a multitude of reason. Childbirth and lactation are some of the key reasons," said Dr Coelho.

Experts said deficiency of vitamins D and B12 are also directly linked to mood swings, feelings of sadness and crying

bouts.

"Deficiency of vitamin D is one of the contributing factors to depression while vitamin B12 is an enzyme of the nervous system with direct implications on psychological health," said Dr Harish Shetty, psychiatrist.