



B

VITAMIN B₆

B Vitamins: Establishing Healthy Growth

VITAMIN B₆ BASICS

Also known as: Pyridoxine

Important for: Metabolism, brain function, immune system

Animal Sources: Chicken, liver, pork, veal, fish (salmon, tuna, sardines, halibut, herring)

Grain/Fruit/Vegetable Sources: Nuts (walnuts, peanuts), corn, whole grains, bread

OVERVIEW

Vitamin B₆ is a water soluble vitamin and is part of the vitamin B complex group. It is important for the majority of biological reactions, metabolism, brain function and the immune system.

DISCOVERY AND HISTORY

Vitamin B₆ was discovered in 1934 by Hungarian-born scientist, Paul György, who was conducting research on skin disease in rats. By 1938, Vitamin B₆ was isolated and in 1939 it was given the name pyridoxine. Finally, in 1957, the required levels of Vitamin B₆ were determined.

VITAMIN B₆ DEFICIENCY

A deficiency of vitamin B₆ alone is uncommon because it usually occurs in combination with a deficit in other B vitamins, especially with riboflavin (vitamin B₂) deficiency.

However, there are still health problems with low levels of vitamin B₆, including:

- Poor growth
- Kidney stones
- Depression
- General fatigue
- Dizziness
- Nerve problems
- Irritability
- Confusion
- Convulsions
- Skin wounds

POPULATIONS AT RISK OF VITAMIN B₆ DEFICIENCY

- Pregnant and breastfeeding women (due to additional body demands)
- The elderly (due to lower food intake)
- Underweight individuals
- Chronic alcoholics
- Women, especially those taking oral contraceptives
- People with high protein intake