



# B

## VITAMIN B<sub>7</sub>

### B Vitamins: Establishing Healthy Growth

#### VITAMIN B<sub>7</sub> BASICS

Also known as: Biotin or Vitamin H

Important for: Hair roots, fingernails

Animal Sources: Liver, kidneys, meat (pork, mutton, poultry), egg yolk

Grain/Fruit/Vegetable Sources: Yeast, vegetables, cereals, walnuts, peanuts, soybeans

#### OVERVIEW

Vitamin B<sub>7</sub>, also known as biotin, is a water-soluble vitamin and is part of the vitamin B complex group. It plays a key role in the metabolism of fats, proteins and carbohydrates. It is often referred to as the “beauty vitamin” because of its beneficial effects for hair and fingernails.

#### DISCOVERY AND HISTORY

In 1901, a scientist discovered that yeast requires a special growth factor which he named “bios.” Over the next 30 years, bios proved to be a mixture of essential factors, one of which is biotin or vitamin B<sub>7</sub>. Finally, in 1931, German scientist Paul György specifically discovered biotin in the liver and called it vitamin H – the H represents “Haut und Haar,” German words for “skin and hair.” Biotin was isolated in 1935.

#### VITAMIN B<sub>7</sub> DEFICIENCY

Biotin deficiency is very rare and mild. Potential deficiency symptoms include:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Inflammation of the tongue
- Depression
- Dry skin
- Loss of appetite
- Pink eye
- Lack of voluntary muscle coordination
- Cracking in the corners of the mouth
- Loss of hair color
- Hair loss (alopecia)

#### POPULATIONS AT RISK OF VITAMIN B<sub>7</sub> DEFICIENCY

- Patients receiving only intravenous nutrition
- People who eat large amounts of raw egg whites
- Dialysis patients
- Diabetics
- People receiving some forms of long-term anticonvulsant therapy
- Patients with abnormalities in food digestion and nutrient absorption
- Pregnant women