



Policy Statement: Prescribing of Cyanocobalamin tablets is not supported

Mid-Essex Clinical Commissioning Group does not support the prescribing of cyanocobalamin tablets for mild vitamin B12 deficiency which is diet related. (refer to [vitamin B12 deficiency guideline](#))

Vitamin B12 (Cyanocobalamin) is involved in:

- Making red blood cells and keeping the nervous system healthy
- Releasing energy from food
- Using Folic Acid

Adults (19-64 years) need about 1.5mcg of vitamin B12 a day.

The Department of Health states that “you should be able to get all the vitamin B12 you need by eating a varied and balanced diet.”

However some people can develop a vitamin B12 deficiency as a result of not getting enough of it in their diet for example, vegans or people who have a very poor diet. There are also some medicines that may reduce the amount of vitamin B12 obtained from dietary sources.

Mild deficiency is defined as a vitamin B12 level of 145-179ng/L.

Recommendations:

- **Recommend dietary changes by introducing foods that are a good source of vitamin B12. Such foods include:** meat, eggs, milk and other dairy products, salmon and cod and foods that have been fortified with vitamin B12 (for example some soy products and some breakfast cereals and breads) which are good alternative sources to meat.
- Advise patients with mild deficiency or patients requiring maintenance therapy following treatment with hydroxocobalamin (deficiency caused by diet or medication) to take oral cyanocobalamin tablets; 50-150 micrograms daily between meals.
- **Do not prescribe cyanocobalamin tablets as they are readily available for purchase over the counter**
- Review all existing patients prescribed cyanocobalamin and advise them it should be purchased.
- Identify patients with mild B12 deficiency (level 145-179ng/L) that may be receiving IM hydroxocobalamin and advise they should be on cyanocobalamin which can be purchased.

It is expected that GPs will not prescribe over the counter (OTC) medicines where it is reasonable and appropriate for patients to obtain low cost OTC medication direct from pharmacies, supermarkets and health shops as advised by the GMC.

<https://midessexccg.nhs.uk/your-health-services/medicines-optimisation/self-care-materials/2635-policy-on-prescribing-of-medicines-that-are-available-for-purchase-self-care-august-2017/file>

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References:	<p>NICE Clinical Knowledge Summaries Anaemia – B12 and folate deficiency. Last revised March 2018 https://cks.nice.org.uk/anaemia-b12-and-folate-deficiency#!topicsummary</p> <p>NHS Choices website Page last reviewed: 03/03/2017. Next review due: 03/03/2020 https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vitamins-and-minerals/vitamin-b/</p>
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