Vitamin B12, also known as cobalamin, is a water-soluble B vitamin. Vitamin B12 is very important in the production of genetic material and red blood cells, as well as in the maintenance of the nervous system. Since it is a water-soluble vitamin, it cannot be stored in the body and needs to be consumed daily.

How much do I need?
- 2.4 micrograms per day for adult men and women
- For recommendations for infants, children, and teens, check out the chart in CSU Extension’s fact sheet Water-Soluble Vitamins: B-Complex and Vitamin C.

Food Sources
Vitamin B12 is found naturally in animal based foods. Great sources include fish, eggs, meat, liver, dairy products, oysters, and shellfish. It has also been fortified, or added, to many products such as breakfast cereals and nutritional yeasts.

What happens if I don’t get enough?
Symptoms of deficiency include anemia, fatigue, brain disorders, and nerve problems causing tingling or numbing sensations. Most vitamin B12 deficiencies occur in vegans, infants of vegan mothers, and the elderly. Since this vitamin is only found naturally in animal products, vegans need to consume adequate amounts through fortified foods, or take a supplement. As people age, it is more common to become deficient in vitamin B12 because their stomachs cannot absorb the nutrient. In this case, treatment with vitamin B12 injections might be needed.

Can I get too much?
Current research does not show any harm for getting too much vitamin B12 in your diet.