



**THE HEALTH SUPPLEMENTS INFORMATION SERVICE REAFFIRMS THE NEED
FOR VITAMIN B SUPPLEMENTATION**

In response to a study¹ due to be published in the Journal of the American Medical Association on September 12, 2007, regarding the effects of folic acid and B vitamin supplementation, the Health Supplements Information Service (HSIS) would like to make the following comment:

Pamela Mason, spokesperson for HSIS notes: “First of all it is vital to point out that B vitamins are essential to health. They are key nutrients for the function of every part of the body, including the brain, nervous system and cardiovascular system.

“The study due to be published this week involved people with chronic kidney disease or end-stage kidney disease. Patients given the folic acid and B vitamin supplements had their homocysteine level lowered by about 26% and lowering homocysteine has been linked in other studies with reduced risk of cardiovascular disease. In this study, however, there were no effects of these lower homocysteine levels on heart attack, stroke or death rates – either positive or negative. But people with such extensive kidney disease, as per the patients in this study, it would be very optimistic, if not far-fetched, to expect a vitamin tablet to improve such a far gone disease status. Such studies are interesting, but add nothing to our knowledge about the appropriate use of vitamin supplements, which is actually to help maintain good health in healthy people. Vitamin supplements were never intended to be used as pharmacological treatments.”

Pamela adds: “Bearing in mind how essential B vitamins are for our overall health, and the large numbers of people have marginal or low intakes, it **would be quite wrong to dissuade people from consuming B vitamins.**”

¹ JAMA 2007;298(10):1163-70

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