



# GLOBAL HEALTH PHARMACY

## *ASK YOUR GLOBAL HEALTH PHARMACIST*

News from Global Health Pharmacy Education Center

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## WHEN MEDICATIONS DEplete NUTRIENTS FROM YOUR BODY

Medications can be life-saving. But take heed: They can also rob your body of nutrients you need.

Nutrient loss can happen in many ways. For example, a medication may:

- Depress your appetite, which means you may not eat enough to stay nourished.
- Increase your desire for less healthy food, such as lots of sugar, bread, or pasta.
- Reduce absorption of certain nutrients in the “gut,” especially in seniors.
- Block nutrient’s effects at the level of the cell.
- Increase loss of nutrients through your urinary system.

Symptoms of nutrient loss may come gradually and look a lot like symptoms of aging, disease, or change in mood – so it’s easy to get caught off guard. For example, pain, numbness, or tingling in the legs may be Vitamin B12 deficiency. Or Magnesium deficiency may cause muscle pain and stiffness. Over time, this deficiency may even contribute to bone disease (Osteoporosis).

Which drugs or medications are the most common culprits? Here’s a brief summary for you.

### **ACID BLOCKERS**

If you have heart burn, reflux, or peptic ulcers, your doctor may prescribe an antacid, H2 blocker, or proton pump inhibitor (PPI). Studies show these drugs may cause many nutrients deficiencies. They can interfere with the breakdown of food or absorption of nutrients. You may lack Vitamin B12, Calcium, Vitamin D, Folic Acid, Chromium, Iron, Zinc, and Phosphorus.

### **ANTIBIOTICS**

Antibiotics are big robbers of a wide range of nutrients. They also kill “good” bacteria in your digestive system. For these reasons, it may be a good idea to take a B vitamin complex or a multivitamin that contains B vitamins – as well as magnesium, calcium, and potassium. You may also consider probiotics and vitamin K – normally made by those “friendly” bacteria.



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## **ANTI – CONVULSANTS**

Seizure medications can cause low levels of vitamin D.

## **ANTI – HYPERTENSIVE (HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE MEDICATIONS)**

Diuretics: also known as fluid or water pills, are great at helping prevent heart attacks in high risk people. But they can deplete magnesium, potassium, sodium, zinc, pyridoxine (Vitamin B6), thiamin (Vitamin B1), and ascorbic acid. They can also mask your blood sugar.

Beta blockers: are great because they lower your blood pressure. However, they can deplete CoQ10. This can be very dangerous. The heart needs a rich supply of this nutrient for energy “factories” of its cells.

**CHOLESTEROL LOWERING DRUGS:** When it comes to high cholesterol, statins are practically a household name. That’s because doctors wildly prescribe them. But the statins also deplete CoQ10 – which is serious.

**HYPOGLYCEMICS (ORAL):** Drugs like Metformin help make insulin work better in the bodies of people with diabetes. But they can reduce levels of Vitamin B12 by half. They also can deplete folic acid and CoQ10.

**HORMONE REPLACEMENT THERAPY (HRT):** Used for menopausal symptoms, HRT may deplete Vitamin B6 and B12, folic acid, and magnesium – critical for not only heart health but also mood. Still moody on HRT? A supplement might make more sense than an antidepressant.

Nearly 50 percent of Americans regularly take a prescription drug or medication. And medication related loss of nutrients is more common than you may realize. Just to be safe, ask Your Global Health Pharmacist or come in and let’s look over your list of medications and make sure you’re not coming up short.

*Nothing herein constitutes medical advice, diagnosis or treatment, or is a substitute for professional advice. You should always seek the advice of your physician or other medical professional if you have questions or concerns about a medical condition*

References:

Nutrition Review: A Practical Guide to Avoiding Drug-Induced Nutrient Depletion. Available at: <http://nutritionreview.org/2013/04/practical-guide-avoiding-drug-induces-nutrient-depletion/> Accessed June, 2015.