

Complete Information on Beriberi

Beriberi or Thiamine deficiency refers to the lack of thiamine pyrophosphate, the active form of the vitamin known as thiamine or vitamin B-1. Beriberi affects many systems of the body, including the muscles, heart, nerves, and digestive system. There are two major types of beriberi wet beriberi affects the cardiovascular system and dry beriberi and Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome affect the nervous system. Beriberi is common in people whose diet consists mainly of polished white rice, which is very low in thiamine because the thiamine-bearing husk has been removed. It is also seen in chronic alcoholics with an inadequate diet.

As well as being a rare side effect of gastric bypass surgery. The disease has been seen established in people in Asian countries , due to those countries' reliance on white rice as a staple food. Beriberi has become rare in the United States because most foods are now vitamin-enriched, which means that a normal diet contains adequate amounts of thiamine. Beri-beri is a nutritional disorder caused by deficiency of vitamin B characterized by damage to nerves and heart; general symptoms include loss of appetite and feeling of lassitude. Both types usually occur in the same patient, with one set of symptoms predominating.

Beriberi can also occur in breast-fed infants when the mother has an inadequate intake of thiamine. It can also affect infants fed uncommon formulas with defective thiamine supplements. Others at risk for beriberi involve patients undergoing dialysis, patients receiving high doses of diuretics, and people in developing countries with limited diets who consume milled rice. Treatment with thiamine reverses the deficiency in the body and relieves most of the symptoms. Severe thiamine deficiency is treated with high doses of thiamine given by injection into a muscle (intramuscular) or in a solution that goes into a vein (intravenously) for several days.

Excess thiamine is eliminated by the body in the urine, and negative response to too much thiamine are rare. Thiamine is unstable in alkali solutions, so it should not be taken with antacids or barbiturates. In Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome, thiamine should be given intravenously or by injection at first because the intestinal absorption of thiamine is probably impaired. Other types of vitamins may also be recommended. People who drink heavily should try to cut down or quit, and take B vitamins to make sure their body is properly absorbing and storing thiamine. Drinking more than one glass of liquid with a meal should be avoided.

About the Author

Juliet Cohen writes articles for [health care blog](#). She also writes articles for [hairstyles gallery](#).

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