

## Another Great Vitamin B Raid?

Newspapers in 1992 proclaimed it The Great B Vitamin Raid. Armed agents stormed into the office of Jonathan Wright, MD taking hostage the clinic's supply of Vitamin B-12 and B-complex along with the clinic's computers, books, files, mailing list, and office equipment.

No charges were ever filed against Dr. Wright (details available in the  [December 17, 2007](#) issue of AAHF Pulse of Health Freedom). But the FDA's action to retaliate against him was telling in three ways. First, the FDA admitted it did not have the evidence required for a search warrant. Second, the raid was clearly in retaliation for a suit filed by Wright after an earlier raid targeting the common amino acid L-tryptophan at Wright's facility. And third, the FDA's bias against supplements and in favor of the prescription drug industry continues to this day. This bias is what connects the dots in a variety of recent FDA actions that might otherwise seem unrelated.



### Vitamin B-6 Now Under Assault

Recently, Medicare Pharma submitted a citizen's petition to the FDA asserting the all dietary supplements containing pyridoxal 5'-phosphate (the natural bioactive form of Vitamin B6 known as P5P supplements) should be banned. As discussed in the July 7, 2008 issue of AAHF Pulse of Freedom, Medicare Pharma wanted to see this natural form of Vitamin B-6 banned from the dietary supplement industry in order to ensure the exclusivity of its drug product, MC-1.

There are prescription forms of various natural nutrients including potassium, coenzyme Q-10, and bromelain, among others. But this hasn't been used as justification to ban the natural form.

B vitamins -- some of our most basic vitamins -- seem especially at risk at the moment. The law states clearly that natural substances may not be patented. But Merck holds a patent on a natural form of Folate (vitamin B-9), the calcium salt of 5-methyl tetrahydrofolate, considered by many to be the best natural form of Folate.

Dr. Steven W. Bailey, a researcher, was able to get five patents issued on the basis of his work with this form of Folate. Merck Eprova acquired license to more than one patent covering the use of 5-methyl tetrahydrofolate, selling it under the trade name Metafolin.

Merck has since only sold this supplement in large bulk quantities and imposed stringent restrictions of the use of Metafolin in dietary supplements that include what formulas and dosages can and cannot be used. Bristol Myers Squibb also obtained a patent in 1999 for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease using Folate.

## **What This Means For All Of Us**

B vitamins are essential nutrients. Dr. Kilmer McCully showed us that key B-vitamin nutrients help control the enzyme homocysteine, a known risk factor for heart disease as well as other conditions.

There is another reason why all of us need vitamins and other supplements and why it is essential to be able to buy them at normal prices, not patented drug prices. A British study by physician Dr. Dave Thomas (using The Chemical Composition of Food in the years 1940 through 1990) showed that most if not all fruits and vegetables have had declining nutrients over that 50-year span. Recent USDA research confirms this fact.

Factory farming has changed the nutrient composition of soil and brought unripened products to the marketplace. The emphasis now is on size, appearance, and a longer shelf-life to sell the product, not on nutritional content.

This analysis was triggered by a British physician's curiosity. His patients had a myriad of chronic diseases yet all claimed to 'eat well.' Indeed, government analyses in the US continue to confirm that there is a correlation between a nutrient poor diet and chronic degenerative disease.

Americans are well fed, and in many cases overfed, yet undernourished. Arizona university research has revealed that most American children get key nutrients only from their morning breakfast cereal. Additional Arizona university research has shown that most Americans get their daily vitamin C from their morning orange juice.

Fewer than ten percent of Americans get the right amount of fruits and vegetables, key sources of nutrients. And a growing number of academia-based experts indicate it is impossible to get the nutrients we need from diet alone. Under these circumstances, supplementation is essential.

May 2005 research published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (as analyzed by Jeffrey Bland, Ph.D. in the Functional Medicine Monthly) notes the fact that 78% of our nation's health care dollars go to the treatment of chronic diseases. A diet rich in processed foods, nutrient depleted foods, and a sedentary lifestyle are correlated with our nation's alarming rates of type II diabetes, heart disease, asthma, allergies, and a host of other chronic diseases.

Combine this with the concept of drug-induced nutrient depletion. For example, oral contraceptives result in lower levels of vitamins that include B-6 as well as other B-vitamins. Steroids deplete the body of more nutrients than any other single classification of drugs.

Magnesium deficiency is widespread thanks to the generous use of certain heart disease related medications including diuretics for high blood pressure and congestive heart failure. According to some, we are now in the midst of a

potential crisis of coenzyme Q-10 deficiency because statin drugs deplete this vital nutrient and statin drug use is at an all time high. Most recently, pediatricians have been told by medical authorities to give statins to children as young as age 8.

The sale of statins has also led to the demonization of cholesterol, a substance that our bodies and especially our brains need, and an effort by drug companies to redefine normal levels of total cholesterol down.

At time when Americans get far too little of key nutrients such as Folic Acid (B-9) because of their consumption of processed grain products, we cannot afford to ignore the move by drug companies either to ban natural vitamins or to patent them. This will restrict our use of these key nutrients and raise the costs of healthcare at a time when those costs have already spiraled out of control, in part because of drug prices. Protecting our access to key natural nutrients is good medicine, for you and me and for this nation.

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