

# War on vitamins consumer chemistry



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## **War on Vitamins/ Consumer Chemistry**

War on Vitamins The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in USA has banned over the counter sale (OTC) of naturally occurring vitamin B6 or pyridoxamine by classifying it as a ' new' drug. This is tantamount to FDA declaring war against the easy availability of naturally occurring micronutrients to favor the large drug companies. 1

The vitamin family consisting of several water and fat soluble vitamins are organic compounds that are required in small quantities in the diet of human beings. Hence they come under the micronutrient classification in human nutrition. Vitamins are essential to the human body, as they are involved in specific metabolic reactions that are critical for the normal growth and development of the human body. With the exception of vitamin D, the human body is unable to produce these micronutrients, and depends on Mother Nature to provide them in the food consumed. 2 Deficiency of vitamin intake can lead to several diseases, and hence in case of deficient vitamin intake, there is the need for vitamin supplementation through easily and affordably available vitamin supplements over the counter. Yet, FDA has chosen to hinder the availability of inexpensive vitamin B6 over the counter by allowing pharmaceutical companies to make extra profits by selling it as a drug. 3

This is not the first time that FDA is involved in such activity. Red yeast rice contains the naturally occurring molecule lovastatin, which lowers the cholesterol levels in the human body. The FDA had no objection to its use till pharmaceutical companies managed to extract this molecule to develop the statin class of cholesterol lowering drugs. The FDA then went after red yeast

rice claiming that it was a supplement that was adulterated with a drug. At this rate it would not be surprising for the FDA to claim that fruits and vegetables are adulterated with drugs, once the pharmaceutical companies find ways to patent vitamin C. 4 Therefore, naturally occurring organic and inorganic molecules should not be treated as drugs, and their over the counter sale should not be restricted by FDA.

#### Works Cited

1. Toussaint Matt. “ War on Vitamins.” 2009. People’s Health. 1 Nov. 2011. .
2. Jeukendrup Asker & Gleeson Michael. Sport Nutrition: An Introduction to Energy Production and Performance. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics. 2004.