# Common medications may cause vitamin deficiencies linked to resurgence of Victorian diseases



A pharmacist has issued a warning about the potential for common medications to contribute to vitamin deficiencies, which may be linked to a resurgence of diseases typically associated with the Victorian era, such as scurvy, shingles, and rickets. Millions of people in the UK are prescribed drugs to manage conditions ranging from arthritis and diabetes to thyroid disorders, but certain drug combinations could inadvertently affect nutrient absorption and lead to health complications.

Peter Thnoia, a pharmacist with PillTime, highlighted several examples of medications that can influence vitamin and mineral levels in the body. He pointed out that diuretics, which are used to treat conditions involving fluid retention such as high blood pressure, may cause a decrease in potassium levels. He explained, "Low potassium can lead to muscle weakness, cramps, fatigue, and even heart rhythm disturbances if left unchecked. While a diet rich in potassium-heavy foods like bananas, avocados, and sweet potatoes can help replenish some of the lost levels, anyone on diuretics should have their nutrient levels checked regularly, as this can make a real difference in spotting early signs."

Corticosteroids, commonly prescribed for diseases including asthma, rheumatoid arthritis, and inflammatory bowel disease, also present risks related to nutrient depletion. Mr Thnoia noted that these steroids reduce calcium absorption while increasing its excretion, stating, "This puts patients at a higher risk of weakened bones, osteoporosis, and fractures, especially as they age. If you're taking corticosteroids regularly, it's important to monitor your bone health and consider calcium and vitamin D supplementation where appropriate."

Other drugs, such as diabetes medications known as SGLT2 inhibitors, may reduce absorption of water-soluble vitamins like B1 (thiamine) and B12. According to Mr Thnoia, "Over time, low levels can contribute to fatigue, memory issues, or even worsening diabetic neuropathy."

Statins, which are taken by around eight million people in the UK to lower cholesterol and reduce the risk of heart disease, can lead to diminished levels of coenzyme Q10—a nutrient vital for cellular energy production. The pharmacist explained that this reduction can cause muscle aches and fatigue.

Mr Thnoia emphasised that patients should not discontinue prescribed medications without medical advice but should remain informed about potential side effects related to nutrient absorption. He said, "There needs to be more education about the impact certain medications have on your body's ability to absorb nutrients, so that patients are informed about additional steps that they may need to take to improve their general health and wellbeing."

He advised those concerned to consult their doctor, who can evaluate how their medication may be affecting them and make adjustments if necessary.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)