VITAMINS

INTRODUCTION

Vitamins are organic nutrients that are required in small quantities for a variety of biochemical functions and which, generally, cannot be synthesed by the body and must therefore be supplied in the diet. The first discovered vitamins, A and B, were found to be fat and water soluble, respectively. As more vitamins were discovered, they were also shown to be either fat or water soluble, and this property was used as a basis for their classification. The water-soluble vitamins were all designated members of the B complex (apart from vitamin C), and the newly discovered fat-soluble vitamins were given alphabetic designation (eg. vitamins D,E,K). Apart from their solubility characteristics, the water soluble vitamins have little in common from the chemical points of view.