

Pernicious anemia is a rare blood disorder characterized by the inability of the body to properly utilize vitamin B12, which is essential for the development of red blood cells. Most cases result from the lack of the gastric protein known as intrinsic factor, without which vitamin B12 cannot be absorbed. The diagnosis of pernicious anemia may be confirmed by a thorough clinical evaluation, including a detailed patient history and specialized laboratory tests. During a Schilling test, the intestines' ability to absorb vitamin B12 is measured. The vitamin is labeled with radioactive cobalt and is ingested by mouth. X-ray studies can then determine if the body is properly absorbing this vitamin.