


## Can thiamin prevent polio?

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Polio, or more accurately polioencephalomalacia (PEM), is a thiamin deficiency that has traditionally been treated with injectable thiamin. In some cases, supplemental dietary thiamin may prevent occurrence of PEM. However, when dietary sulfur concentrations (from feed ingredients or water) are exceedingly high, it is currently thought that a different form of PEM, called sulfur-induced PEM, results. This form of PEM doesn't appear to respond to supplemental thiamin and may not respond to normal PEM treatment protocols.

Supplemental thiamine (125 mg to 1 g) may be beneficial in coping with high-sulfate water, but minimal research has examined this as an option, and the results have been inconsistent. High concentrations of molybdenum have also been used to prevent sulfate problems; however, this strategy simply creates another problem by antagonizing copper absorption. Regardless of any dietary manipulations, it is important to become familiar with the signs of sulfur-associated PEM and develop an appropriate treatment plan with your veterinarian.

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