



Testing for Stomach Acidity

A normal stomach acid level creates a pH of 1.5 to 2.5. But as we age, the parietal cells in the stomach lining produce less HCl. In fact, half of people over the age of 60 have hypochlorhydria (low stomach acid), and by the age of 85, 80% of the healthy people tested, had low stomach acid. Use of acid-blocking medications increases stomach pH to 3.5 or higher. This inhibits pepsin, which can be irritating to the stomach, but pepsin is also essential for digestion of protein. Stomach acid is also necessary for absorption of many minerals. In addition, stomach acid provides our first defence against food poisoning, H.pylori and parasitic and other infections. Without adequate acid, we leave ourselves open to decreased immune resistance. The symptoms of hypo-acidity often mimic those of hyper-acidity.

Hypochlorhydria has been associated with many common health problems. Adequate HCl is necessary for the absorption of vitamin B12 from food: B12 deficiency causes weakness, fatigue, and nervous system problems. Vitamin C levels are also low in people with poor stomach acid. Several minerals require an acidic environment for absorption, including iron, calcium, magnesium, zinc, and copper. Acid is critical for the breakdown of protein bonds in the stomach, and poor acid content in the stomach causes indigestion.

Common Symptoms of Hypochlorhydria:

- Bloating, belching, burning and flatulence immediately after meals.
 - A sense of fullness after eating.
- Indigestion, diarrhoea or constipation.
 - Multiple food allergies.
 - nausea after taking supplements.
 - Itching around the rectum.
- Weak, peeling and cracking fingernails.
- Dilated blood vessels in the cheeks and nose (in non-alcoholics).
 - Acne.
 - Iron deficiency.
 - Chronic candida infection.
- Upper digestive tract gassiness.

Precautions:

HCl can irritate sensitive tissue and can be corrosive to teeth; therefore, capsules should not be emptied into food or dissolved in beverages.

When you have adequate HCl, you will have good absorption of all your nutrients and can then watch the rapid regeneration of health in every brain / body system.

Stomach acid self-test:

Insufficient amounts of HCl can lead to indigestion, HCl levels often decline with age.

You can determine if you need more hydrochloric acid with this simple test. Take a tablespoon of apple cider vinegar or lemon juice. If this makes your indigestion go away, then you need more stomach acid. If it makes your symptoms worse, then you have too much acid, and you should take care not to take any supplements that contain HCl.

Please Note:

This pamphlet only provides information and is not for diagnosis or treatment of specific illnesses. Pregnant women, those sensitive to specific herbs, on prescription drugs/medication should first consult their practitioners before taking any herbal remedies. Tell your doctor if you are using herbs and natural supplements before going for surgery as they prevent blood from clotting. You are responsible for your own actions and decisions. Do as much of your own research as possible.



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Self-testing and temperature for low HCl / hypochlorhydria:

For the brave ones. To get the dosage of Betaine Hydrochloric acid right.

1. Begin by taking one 350-370 mg capsule of betaine HCl with a protein-containing meal. A normal response in a healthy person would be discomfort - basically heartburn. If you do not feel a burning sensation, begin taking 2 capsules with each protein-containing meal.
2. If there are no reactions after 2 days, increase the number of capsules with each meal to 3.
3. Continue increasing the number of capsules every 2 days, using up to 8 capsules with each meal if necessary. These dosages may seem large, but a normal functioning stomach manufactures considerably more. You'll know when you have taken too much if you experience tingling, heartburn, diarrhoea or any type of discomfort including a feeling of unease, digestive discomfort, neck ache, backache, headache or any new odd symptom. If you experience tingling, burning or any symptom that is uncomfortable, you can neutralise the acid with 1 teaspoon sodium bicarbonate in water.
4. When you reach a state of tingling, burning or any other type of discomfort, cut back by one capsule per meal. If the discomfort continues, discontinue the HCl and consult with your healthcare professional.
5. Once you have established a dose (either 8 capsules or less, if warmth or heaviness occurs), continue this dose.
6. With smaller meals, you may require less HCl so you may reduce the amount of capsules taken.
7. Individuals with very moderate HCl deficiency generally show rapid improvement in symptoms and have early signs of intolerance to the acid. This typically indicates a return to normal acid secretion.
8. Individuals with low HCl / pepsin typically do not experience such quick improvements, so to maximize the absorption and benefit from the nutrients you take, it is important to be consistent with your HCl supplementation.



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