

Balancing Acid/Alkaline Foods

A surprising number and variety of physical problems and diseases can be caused by the problem of foods that are acid-producing after digestion. Today the vast majority of the populace in industrialized nations suffers from problems caused by the stress of acidosis, because both modern lifestyle and diet promote acidification of the body's internal environment.

The current typical Western diet is largely composed of acid-forming foods (proteins, cereals, sugars). Alkaline-producing foods such as vegetables are eaten in much smaller quantities. Stimulants like tobacco, coffee, tea, and alcohol are also extremely acidifying. Stress, and physical activity (both insufficient or excessive amounts) also cause acidification.

Many foods are alkaline-producing by nature, but manufactured processed foods are mostly acid-producing. It is important to consume at least 60% alkaline-producing foods in our diet, in order to maintain health. We need plenty of fresh fruits and particularly vegetables (alkaline-producing) to balance our necessary protein intake (acid-producing). And we need to avoid processed, sugary or simple-carbohydrate foods, not only because they are acid-producing but also because they raise blood sugar level too quickly (high [glycemic index](#)[1] therefore fattening); plus they tend to be nutrient-lacking and may be toxic too.

What is the body's pH?

Water is the most abundant compound in the human body, comprising 70% of the body. The body therefore contains a wide range of solutions, which may be more or less acid. pH (potential of Hydrogen) is a measure of the acidity or alkalinity of a solution - the ratio between positively charged ions (acid-forming) and negatively charged ions (alkaline-forming.) The pH of any solution is the measure of its hydrogen-ion concentration. The higher the pH reading, the more alkaline and oxygen rich the fluid is. The lower the pH reading, the more acidic and oxygen deprived the fluid is. The pH range is from 0 to 14, with 7.0 being neutral. Anything above 7.0 is alkaline, anything below 7.0 is considered acidic.

Human blood pH should be slightly alkaline (7.35 - 7.45). Below or above this range means symptoms and disease. If blood pH moves below 6.8 or above 7.8, cells stop functioning and the body dies. The body therefore continually strives to balance pH. When this balance is compromised many problems can occur.

An imbalanced diet high in acidic-producing foods such as animal protein, sugar, caffeine, and processed foods puts pressure on the body's regulating systems to maintain pH neutrality. The extra buffering required can deplete the body of alkaline minerals such as sodium, potassium, magnesium, and calcium, making the person prone to chronic and degenerative disease. Minerals are borrowed from vital organs and bones to buffer (neutralize) the acid and safely remove it from the body. Because of this strain, the body can suffer severe and prolonged damage - a condition that may go undetected for years.

Health problems caused by acidosis

If you have a health problem, most likely you are suffering from acidosis. Research shows that unless the body's pH level is slightly alkaline, the body cannot heal itself. So no matter what means you choose to take care of your health, it won't be effective until the pH level is balanced. If your body's pH is not balanced, for example, you cannot effectively assimilate vitamins, minerals and food supplements. Your body pH affects everything.

Acidosis will decrease the body's ability to absorb minerals and other nutrients, decrease the energy production in the cells, decrease its ability to repair damaged cells, decrease its ability to detoxify heavy metals, make tumor cells thrive, and make it more susceptible to fatigue and illness.

An acidic pH can occur from an acid-forming diet, emotional stress, toxic overload, and/or immune reactions or any process that deprives the cells of oxygen and other nutrients. The body will try to compensate for acidic pH by using alkaline minerals. If the diet does not contain enough minerals to compensate, a build-up of acids in the cells will occur. Acidosis can cause such problems as:

Cardiovascular damage.	Leg cramps and spasms	Loose and painful teeth.
Weight gain, obesity and diabetes.	Aching muscles and lactic acid buildup.	Inflamed, sensitive gums.
Bladder conditions.	Low energy and chronic fatigue.	Mouth and stomach ulcers.
Kidney stones.	Slow digestion and elimination.	Cracks at the corners of the lips.
Immune deficiency.	Yeast/fungal overgrowth.	Excess stomach acid.
Acceleration of free radical damage.	Lack of energy and fatigue.	Gastritis.
Hormonal problems.	Lower body temperature.	Nails are thin and split easily.
Premature aging.	Headaches.	Hair looks dull, has split ends, and falls out.
Osteoporosis and joint pain.	Inflammation of the corneas and eyelids.	Dry skin.
		Skin easily irritated..

Test Your Body's Acidity or Alkalinity with pH Strips

It is recommended that you test your pH levels to determine if your body's pH needs immediate attention. By using pH test strips (Litmus Paper), you can determine your pH factor quickly and easily in the privacy of your own home. The best time to test your pH is about one hour before a meal and two hours after a meal.

Saliva pH Test:

Simply wet a piece of Litmus Paper with your saliva. While generally more acidic than blood, salivary pH mirrors the blood and tells us what the body retains. It is a fair indicator of the health of the extracellular fluids and their alkaline mineral reserves. The optimal pH for saliva is 6.4 to 6.8. A reading lower than 6.4 is indicative of insufficient alkaline reserves. After eating, the saliva pH should rise to 7.5 or more. To deviate from an ideal salivary pH for an extended time invites illness. If your saliva stays between 6.5 and 7.5 all day, your body is functioning within a healthy range.

Acidosis, an extended time in the acid pH state, can result in rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes, lupus, tuberculosis, osteoporosis, high blood pressure, most cancers and many more. If salivary pH stays too low, the diet should focus on fruit, vegetables and mineral water as well as remove strong acidifiers such as sodas, whole wheat and red meat.

Urine pH Test:

The pH of the urine indicates how the body is working to maintain the proper pH of the blood. The urine reveals the alkaline (building - anabolic) and acid (tearing down - catabolic) metabolic cycles. The pH of urine indicates the efforts of the body via the kidneys, adrenals, lungs and gonads to regulate pH through the buffer salts and hormones. Urine can provide a fairly accurate picture of body chemistry, because the kidneys filter out the buffer salts of pH regulation and provide values based on what the body is eliminating. Urine pH can vary from around 4.5 to 9.0 in extremes, but the ideal range is 6.0 to 7.0. If your urinary pH fluctuates between 6.0 to 6.5 first thing in the morning and between 6.5 and 7.0 in the evening before dinner, your body is functioning within a healthy range.

Foods: are they Acid or Alkaline-forming?

Note that a food's acid or alkaline-forming tendency in the body has nothing to do with the actual pH of the food itself. For example, lemons are very acidic, however the end-products they produce after digestion and assimilation are very alkaline so lemons are alkaline-forming in the body. Likewise, meat will test alkaline before

digestion but it leaves acidic residue in the body so, like nearly all animal products, meat is classified as acid-forming.

It is important that your daily dietary intake of food naturally acts to balance your body pH. To maintain health, the diet should consist of at least 60% alkaline forming foods and at most 40% acid forming foods. To restore health, the diet should consist of 80% alkaline forming foods and 20% acid forming foods.

FOOD CATEGORY	High Alkaline	Alkaline	Low Alkaline	Low Acid	Acid	High Acid
BEANS, VEGETABLES & LEGUMES	Asparagus, Onions, Vegetable Juices, Parsley, Raw Spinach, Broccoli, Garlic, Barley Grass	Okra, Squash, Green Beans, Beets, Celery, Lettuce, Zucchini, Sweet Potato, Carob	Carrots, Tomatoes, Fresh Corn, Mushrooms, Cabbage, Peas, Cauliflower, Turnip, Beetroot, Potato Skins, Olives, Soybeans, Tofu	Cooked Spinach, Kidney Beans	Potatoes (without skins), Pinto Beans, Navy Beans, Lima Beans	
FRUIT	Lemons, Watermelon, Limes, Grapefruit, Mangoes, Papayas	Dates, Figs, Melons, Grapes, Papaya, Kiwi, Berries, Apples, Pears, Raisins	Oranges, Bananas, Cherries, Pineapple, Peaches, Avocados	Plums, Processed Fruit Juices	Sour Cherries, Rhubarb, Canned Fruit	Blueberries, Cranberries, Prunes, Sweetened Fruit Juice
GRAINS, CEREALS			Amaranth, Millet, Lentils, Sweetcorn, Wild Rice, Quinoa	Rye Bread, Sprouted Wheat Bread, Spelt, Brown Rice	White Rice, Corn, Buckwheat, Oats, Rye	Wheat, White Bread, Pastries, Biscuits, Pasta
MEAT				Liver, Oysters, Venison, Cold Water Fish	Turkey, Chicken, Lamb	Beef, Pork, Shellfish
EGGS & DAIRY		Breast Milk	Soy Cheese, Soy Milk, Goat Milk, Goat Cheese, Whey	Eggs, Butter, Yogurt, Buttermilk, Cottage Cheese, Cream	Raw Milk	Cheese, Homogenized Milk, Ice Cream, Custard

NUTS & SEEDS		Almonds	Chestnuts, Brazils, Hazelnuts, Coconut	Pumpkin, Sesame, Sunflower Seeds	Pecans, Cashews, Pistachios	Peanuts, Walnuts
OILS	Olive Oil	Flax Seed Oil	Canola Oil	Corn Oil, Sunflower Oil, Margarine, Lard		
BEVERAGES	Herb Teas, Lemon Water	Green Tea	Ginger Tea	Tea, Cocoa	Coffee, Wine	Beer, Liquor, Soft Drinks
SWEETENERS, CONDIMENTS	Stevia	Maple Syrup, Rice Syrup	Raw Honey, Raw Sugar	Processed Honey	White Sugar, Brown Sugar, Molasses, Jam, Ketchup, Mayo, Mustard, Vinegar	Artificial Sweetener, Chocolate

But remember, you don't have to cut out all acid-forming foods - some are necessary, otherwise you probably wouldn't get enough protein and variety of nutrients, yet alone make interesting meals that you enjoy. But you DO want to shift the overall balance of your diet over toward the alkaline, and away from the excessively acid-forming diet of conventional western culture.

Free range eggs, fish, beans, unsaturated oils - these are healthy foods, low glycemic and nutritious, and even if marginally acid-forming (or alkaline or between the two depending on how you measure or what chart you read), they are NOT the culprits in an acid-forming diet. The real culprits are sugar and simple carbohydrates, red meat, colas and so on - these are the ones to cut out of your diet as much as possible.

Similarly, be sure to include your share of the high alkaline-forming foods to balance those low-acid foods you eat for their overall nutritional value. And make alkaline choices, e.g. better to have brown rice than white rice, even though both are on the acid-forming side, because it moves you in the right pH direction - less acid - and also is more healthy and nutritious in other respects. All natural, raw, vegetable and fruit juices are alkaline-producing. (Fruit juices become more acid-producing when processed and especially when sweetened.)

The Science: Why are acidic lemons alkaline-producing?

The answer is simply that when we digest the food, it produces alkaline residue. That's why we classify it as an alkaline food. When we digest a food it is chemically oxidized ('burned') to form water, carbon dioxide and an inorganic compound. The alkaline or acidic nature of the inorganic compound formed determines whether the food is alkaline or acid-producing. If it contains more sodium, potassium or calcium, it's classed as an alkaline food. If it contains more sulphur, phosphate or chloride, it's classed as an acid food.

There are a few other things, in addition to diet, that can be done to help correct an over acidic balance. These include taking enzyme supplements, organic calcium and magnesium supplements, colloidal minerals, vitamin A and D, and drinking alkaline vegetable juices (carrot, celery and beet) and lemon/maple syrup drink.

We can remedy our over-acidic bodies in the short term with alkalizing supplements, but going forward, we must also choose a diet which is balanced on the side of alkaline-forming foods. Fortunately most of these are also [low glycemic\[1\]](#), which takes care of the second primary factor in our creating a healthy diet. Ensure adequate Omega 3 with oily fish in our diet, which is another primary factor, and we can be sure to live long and healthy lives.

If you would like to know more about changing your diet to give you maximum energy, then check out the book by Dr Robert O. Young, "[The pH Miracle\[2\]](#)." It contains information about how disease manifests, how to detox and maintain balanced health, along with diet info and recipes.

