

IN THIS ISSUE

Hot Health Topic

The Importance of Acid-Base Balance in Health

Nutrition Tips

Eating With The Seasons:
Part Two - Summer

Healthy Recipe

Spinach and Avocado Salad
with warm mustard
vinaigrette

Medical Testing

Food Allergy Testing

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Hot Health Topic

The Importance of Acid-Base Balance in Health

The human body works very hard on a daily basis to achieve certain chemical, hormonal and enzymatic balances important for health and survival. When an imbalance occurs, they body does whatever it can to remedy the situation, otherwise symptoms and health conditions develop. One of the strictest regulations the body has is on acid-alkaline balance (also referred to as the "pH" of the body).

Back in the days of hunters and gatherers, the diet comprised of high protein sources from animal meats, balanced with a lot of alkaline-forming leafy greens, root vegetables, and fruits. Our diets today are very different, with the consumption of more nutrient-deficient, over-processed foods. In addition, many of our diets consist of more acid-forming foods such as dairy, processed meats and grains. Our bodies are also producing more and more acidic waste products from stress, inflammation, insufficient exercise and toxin accumulation. As a result, the intricate acid-base balance is disrupted, leading to various symptoms and overall ill-health. Some conditions that have been shown to be influenced by chronic acidity include: gastrointestinal problems, inflammation, joint pain, osteoporosis, and cancer.

Determining your pH status

The easiest way to know your acid-base status is to measure the pH of your urine. The pH of the first morning urine should be around 6.8, peaking in the late-afternoon to around an 8 or 9. If your first morning urine has a pH of lower than 6.8 (ie. more acidic) or you do not get a rise in pH throughout the day, you may have a problem with chronic acidity.

How to alkalinize your body

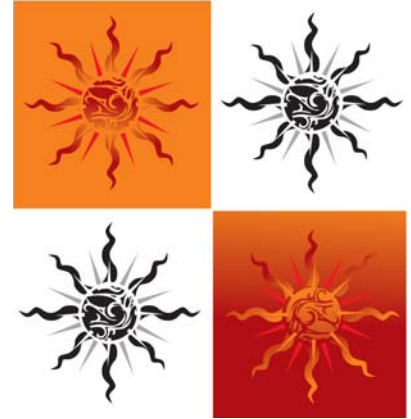
Diet has a large effect on acid-base balance. An ideal diet should comprise of 75% alkaline-forming and 25% acid-forming foods (see food chart below). Sufficient fluid intake is important, especially water and/or herbal teas. Regular exercise and deep breathing helps remove acidic waste products from our bodies, and stress management has an amazing alkaline effect. Finally, nutritional supplementation with bicarbonate salts may be necessary to neutralize acids and improve overall aspects of health and disease.

Acid-forming Foods	Alkaline-forming Foods
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grains (wheat, rice, corn)• Meats (beef, chicken, turkey, pork)• Processed meats (sausages, cold cuts)• Dairy (cheese, eggs, milk, yogurt)• Beer, pop, coffee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fruits (apples, bananas, pears, peaches, raisins, strawberries)• Vegetables (spinach, zucchini, potatoes, cauliflower, carrots, celery, broccoli)• Almonds, hazelnuts, seeds• Water, green tea, fresh juices

Nutrition Tips

Eating With The Seasons: Part Two – Summer

Summer is a time of activity, growth and brightness. There is an abundance of brightly coloured fruits and vegetables in the summer that can be used to create beautiful meals. Cooling fresh foods include salads, sprouts, fruit, cucumber, tofu, and flower and leaf teas including chrysanthemum, mint, and chamomile. One should eat less and lightly on those hot summer days. Be careful not to overdo cold foods such as iced drinks and ice cream, as they negatively interfere with digestion.



Healthy Recipe

Spinach and Avocado Salad with warm mustard vinaigrette

Try this great tasting summer salad as a light lunch or a side dish! Serves 4-6 people.

Ingredients:

- 1 bunch red or green leaf lettuce
- 1 bunch spinach
- 2 medium avocados
- 3 tbsp olive oil



- 2 tsp sesame seeds
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 2 tsp wholegrain Dijon mustard

Method:

1. Wash and thoroughly dry the spinach and lettuce leaves. Tear leaves into bite-size pieces. Place in a large serving bowl.
2. Peel the avocados and cut into thin slices. Scatter over the leaves. Heat 1 tbsp of oil in a small pan. Add the sesame seeds and cook over low heat until they just start to turn golden. Remove from the heat immediately and allow to cool slightly.
3. Add the lemon juice, remaining oil and mustard to the pan and stir to combine. While still warm, pour over the salad and toss gently to coat leaves. Salad is best served immediately.

Medical Testing

Food Sensitivity Testing

More and more research are showing the link between food sensitivities and the development of many health conditions such as asthma, inflammatory conditions (arthritis, headaches, skin conditions), and gastro-intestinal disorders (indigestion, acid reflux, IBS, dysbiosis). These food sensitivities are often difficult to detect as it can take hours to days after the ingestion of an allergen before symptoms develop. This delayed hypersensitivity reaction also makes it difficult to ascertain the causative food allergen(s). Naturopathic doctors offer a simple blood spot test to detect one's sensitivities to up to 96 different types of foods. Ask your Naturopathic doctor for more information on food sensitivity testing and how it can help you on your journey to health.