

# Restoring acid alkaline balance for better health

**T**he new buzz word in health is pH! Go Vita explains why keeping your body alkaline is imperative for optimum health.

pH is another important (if not the most important) measurable parameter of your body's health like blood pressure and cholesterol levels. All life on earth needs to maintain a pH balance for optimal function. When your pH levels are balanced internally your body is full of vitality, increased energy and mental clarity. It can then function to the best of its biochemical ability.

For you to reach and maintain optimum health your blood, fluids and delicate tissues throughout your body must remain alkaline. This however is in a constant state of flux as practically every metabolic process in your body from breathing, to digestion, to the production of energy, all create acidic by-products. So your body is constantly working to maintain a very delicate balance between acid and alkaline.

## The dangers of too much acid

When you get out of balance and become too acidic then your health is directly affected, your body becomes stressed and susceptible to many health issues including:

- Lack of energy / fatigue
- Weight gain
- Muscle aches and pains
- Frequent colds and flu
- Nasal congestion and excess mucus production
- Anxiety and irritability
- Poor digestion

The other issue is that if you already suffer from some form of disease, increase in body acidity will increase inflammation, soft tissue degeneration and bone loss, which results in an increase in pain and damage to body tissues. Probably one of the most serious implications is in your body's ability to build bone.

## The effect of acidity on bone

A report in the *Journal of Nutrition* in 2008 by Arnett shows that when your body is too acidic ie has a pH less than 7, your body begins to break down bone for the calcium, which is used to buffer the body's internal acid levels. However at a pH of 7.2 it maintains the bone levels you have and at a pH over 7.4 your body will start to build bone. The underlying problem is that with today's acidic modern diet, your bones are being sacrificed daily to try to keep your body alkaline, this not only results in loss in calcium but many other minerals that are normally stored in the bone matrix. And remember bone health is just one factor in the whole acid/alkaline balance story.

## ph 101

pH stands for potential of hydrogen. It is a measure of the acidity of a solution at one end of the scale (a pH below 7) and the alkalinity of a solution at the other end of the scale (a pH above 7 through to 14). The scale ranges from 0-14. pH neutral is 7 on the scale, for example water has a pH of 7 and is considered neither acid or alkaline.



## Factors that contribute to your body's pH imbalance

There are three key issues that individually or jointly result in your body becoming pH imbalanced ie too acidic with a pH less than 7.4:

### 1. You consuming acidic-forming foods

With too many processed foods, overcooked meals, lots of animal products and grains and plenty of additives like sugar, salt and chemicals, the modern diet is way too acidic. But the good news is it is easy to change! Increasing fresh live raw food (particularly greens!) and clean mineralised water is all it takes.

Also at this point it is probably a good idea to explain 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 but the end result after digestion and assimilation is very alkaline, so lemons are alkaline-forming in the body. Likewise, meat will test alkaline before digestion but leaves a very acidic residue in the body so, like nearly all animal products, is very acid-forming.

If you are planning how you can change your diet, my advice to you is to include 100-300g of raw leafy greens a day - check out our smoothie recipe as a very simple way of doing this, and then add a couple of handfuls of a raw green leafy salad to lunch and dinner and you are there! If getting the salad greens is not always possible, then I recommend adding barley grass powder to your smoothie, this not only increases its alkalisng ability but is also a good way to reduce cholesterol levels by six to 12 percent. Barley grass also improves the liver's ability to reduce production of bad cholesterol by up to 18 per cent – no wonder they call it a super food! Look for certified organic, Australian grown barley grass for best results.

And one more change you need to make is to stop drinking tap water and start drinking alkaline mineralised water (more on that later!)

### 2. Your body creating acids (toxicity and stress)

According to Swiss naturopath Christopher Vasey, some individuals (and this is the minority) have impaired ability to metabolise acids that the body creates so they may eat a reasonably alkaline diet yet be extremely acidic. He stresses that this arises from the kidney's inability to clear the acids via the urine correctly (the easiest way to determine this is to measure your first urine of the day for a week, it should be very acidic pH5-6.5, while the readings half an hour before lunch and dinner should be alkaline. If the first morning urine is reasonably alkaline you have an issue). To help these people I recommend the same steps as in 1 above but combined with a gentle kidney tonic and diuretic.

### 3. Your body improperly eliminates acids (mineral depletion)

In today's world we are all deficient in minerals. If the body is depleted in minerals it cannot function biologically correctly and pH will become acidic. Modern agriculture is designed to grow beautiful and bountiful lush vegetables. Unfortunately this translates to mineral deficient plants as their natural growth cycle will take up phosphate and nitrogen fertilisers at the expense of minerals. Buying organic produce or better still growing your own greens (sprinkled with rock dust and seaweed fertiliser) is an easy way of increasing your mineral intake on a daily basis. In the meantime

as you are rebalancing an acidic system, drinking 2 litres of alkaline mineralised water a day is a must. Now that is not as difficult as it sounds! Add a sachet of alkaline mineral granules such as Eko water to your bottle every day. You can use one sachet for three bottles of water a day – just leave the sachet in and refill the bottle.

While tap water is reasonably neutral it does contain some harmful ingredients such as chlorine, and reverse osmosis water can be quite acidic. This means adding alkaline minerals to your daily water is a must as I for one am not going to begin drinking tap water again!

### Sample breakfast

Alkaline - forming	Neutral	Acid-forming
Herbal tea		Coffee
Alkalisising green smoothie		
	Whole grain bread	White bread
Almond paste		Jam
Dried fruit & almond granola with almond milk	Fresh fruit and yoghurt	
Banana		
Soya / almond milk		Homogenised milk

### Alkalisising green smoothie

500ml filtered water

2 teaspoons NutriVital Good For You Foods Barley Grass powder

150-300g fruit (I use 1 banana, 1 pear and 2 dates)

100g leafy greens (1 use a mix of silverbeet, spinach and dandelion tops)

1. Place in order listed into the blender
2. Blend well – approx one minute depending on your blender
3. Serve and drink (can store excess in fridge for 24 hours)

The smoothie is only limited by your imagination and what is in your garden or fridge! This recipe is for one person. You will need a good blender ≥900W to pulverise the ingredients. You might think this doesn't actually sound delicious but it is - even my two year old loves it! You don't actually taste the greens.

#### REFERENCES

*Dietary Reference Intakes; Washington, DC; National Academies Press; 1994: 186-268*  
*Arnett TR; Extracellular pH regulates Bone Cell Function; J. Nutr.; 138:4155-4185, 2008*  
*Christopher Vasey; The Acid-Alkaline Diet; 1999*

## Are you acidic?

### Get your FREE test kit

Drop in to your Go Vita health shop and pick up your free pH test kit and booklet. Place the single test strip on your tongue first thing in the morning – wait a couple of seconds and then check the colour against the chart provided. You can test your pH two days a week until you get improved results.

## THE ACID/ALKALINE FOOD TABLE

Most alkaline	Alkaline	Lowest alkaline	FOOD CATEGORY	Lowest acid	Acid	Most acid
Stevia	Maple syrup, rice syrup	Raw honey, raw sugar	<b>SWEET-ENERS</b>	Processed honey, molasses	White sugar, brown sugar	NutraSweet, Equal, Aspartame, Sweet'n low
Lemons, watermelon, limes, grapefruit, mangoes, papayas	Dates, figs, melons, grapes, papaya, kiwi fruit, blueberries, apples, pears, raisins	Oranges, bananas, cherries, pineapple, peaches, avocados	<b>FRUITS</b>	Plums, processed fruit juices	Sour cherries, rhubarb	Blackberries, cranberries, prunes
Asparagus, onions, vegetable juices, parsley, raw spinach, broccoli, garlic	Okra, squash, green beans, beets, celery, lettuce, zucchini, sweet potatoes, carob	Carrots, tomatoes fresh corn, mushrooms, cabbage, peas, potato skins, olives, soybeans, tofu	<b>BEANS/VEGETABLES / LEGUMES</b>	Cooked spinach, kidney beans, string beans	Potatoes (without skins), pinto beans, navy beans, lima beans	Chocolate
Olive oil	Almonds	Chestnuts	<b>NUTS/SEEDS</b>	Pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds	Pecans, cashews	Peanuts, walnuts
	Flaxseed oil	Canola oil	<b>OILS</b>	Corn oil		
		Amaranth, millet, wild rice, quinoa	<b>GRAINS/CEREALS</b>	Sprouted wheat bread, spelt, brown rice	White rice, corn, buckwheat, oats, rye	Wheat, white flour, pastries, pasta
			<b>MEATS</b>	Venison, cold water fish	Turkey, chicken, lamb	Beef, pork, shellfish
	Breast milk	Soy cheese, soy milk, goat's milk, goat's cheese, whey	<b>EGGS/DAIRY</b>	Eggs, butter, yoghurt, buttermilk, cottage cheese	Raw milk	Cheese, homogenised milk, ice-cream
Herb teas, lemon water	Green tea	Ginger tea	<b>BEVERAGES</b>	Tea	Coffee	Beer, soft drinks