

Importance of Stomach Acid

This simple test will approximate your stomach's acidity. Often heartburn is treated as a condition of high stomach acidity (hyperchlorhydria), but it can also result when the stomach does not produce enough acid (hypochlorhydria). When low stomach acid is improperly treated with medications that lessen acid production in the stomach, the cause of the problem worsens, and the stomach produces even less acid.

Stomach acid production commonly decreases with age and can lead to health concerns including:

- **Heartburn & acid reflux**
- **Enamel erosion**
- **Lower mouth pH → makes you more prone to cavities and periodontal disease**
- **Chronic bad breath**
- **Malabsorption of nutrients (especially fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, K which are CRITICAL for bone/tooth health and proper calcium absorption)**
- **GI Issues: Dysbiosis (improper balance of gut bacteria), gas/bloating, diarrhea, iron-deficiency anemia**
- **Skin issues: dry/thin skin and hair, acne, allergies**
- **Other: chronic fatigue, weakened immune system, aggravation of arthritis or other inflammatory conditions**

Your stomach produces hydrochloric acid which is involved in digesting food. The baking soda solution you will be drinking reacts with the acid to produce carbon dioxide gas. The amount of gas produced depends upon the quantity of acid in your stomach. Carry out the following test to determine your stomach's acidity:

1. Perform test first thing in the morning on an empty stomach (before eating or drinking)
2. Dissolve ¼ teaspoon of baking soda into 8 oz of cold water
3. Drink the solution and start a timer
4. Record the time until your first burp
5. Perform on 5 consecutive days (or longer) at the same time each day to give a better estimation of your stomach's acidity

What do your results mean?

Less than 2 minutes to burp = Normal level acidity

2 to 5 minutes to burp = low-normal acidity

More than 5 minutes to burp = possible hypochlorhydria

What to do test positive for hypochlorhydria?

- Talk to your health care professional
- Consider taking a digestive enzyme supplement with meals or incorporating lemon or apple cider vinegar
- Make sure you are getting enough water, salt, and zinc in your diet
- Incorporate fermented foods (sauerkraut, kimchi, pickled veggies) and drinks (ACV, kefir)
- Consume liquid nutrition such as green smoothies or protein shakes