There are 2 tests you can try at home to help determine if you have low HCL

1. **Betaine HCL Challenge Test for Low Stomach Acid**

Note: Consult your holistic practitioner or physician before trying this test or supplementing with HCL. DO NOT attempt this if you have an ulcer or on PPI's

Instructions:

Begin by taking 1 capsule of betaine hydrochloride (BH) before your largest meal of the day. (5-10 minutes before)

You should feel a burning or warming sensation in your stomach or upper abdomen. You may also feel slightly "acidic," or as though you have indigestion (Don't worry, this will go away once you begin eating.) This reaction indicates you that your stomach acid is sufficient. The test is now complete and I recommend repeating it yearly since stomach acid levels tend to decrease with aging as well as stress.

If no reaction is felt after taking the BH, the next day increase by 1 pill daily (so you will take 2 before your largest meal). Increase the dose daily until you reach the burning/warming point. Once you have reached that point then consider that the max dose. The next day, decrease the dose by 1 pill and continue to take with your largest meal. (Ex. if it takes 3 pills before you feel a reaction, then you would supplement daily with 2 pills).

Don't worry, you won't need to stay on these pills forever. Book an appointment with your holistic practitioner who can help you choose the right enzyme and correct your digestive imbalance.

2. **Baking Soda Test**

This test involves you drinking a baking soda solution which reacts with the hydrochloric acid in your stomach to produce carbon dioxide gas that causes burping. If you have no hydrochloric acid, you will not burp or it will take you a long time to burp.

Instructions:

1. Mix 1/4 teaspoon of baking soda in about half a cup of cold water first thing in the morning before eating or drinking anything.
2. Drink the baking soda solution.
3. Time how long it takes you to belch. Time up to five minutes. If you have not belched within five minutes stop timing.

In theory, if your stomach is producing adequate amounts of stomach acid you'll likely belch within two to three minutes. Early and repeated belching may be due to excessive stomach acid (but don't confuse these burps with small little burps from swallowing air when drinking the solution). If you do not belch until after 3 minutes, then this indicates you likely have a low acid level.