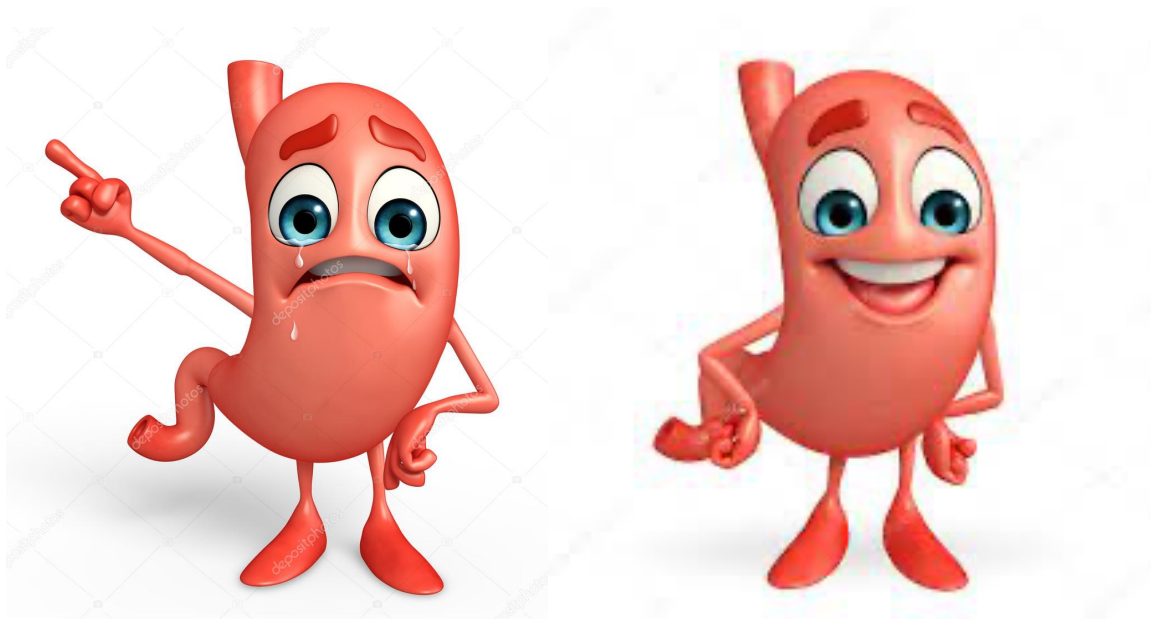


Supplemental Stomach Acid Trial

Do you have low stomach acid?



Low stomach acid experiment

The goal is to give the body an opportunity to experiment with increased acidity and communicate by its reaction whether the support is needed and, if so, how much is optimal at this time. Stomach acidity supplementation can be a very beneficial choice while you are working with your healthcare practitioner to address the upstream root causes of the deficiency.

Plan your experiment over a week when you will be living your typical lifestyle and have time to focus self-awareness on your body. Acquire capsules of “HCl betaine with pepsin” (HCl); most brands will contain 600-650mg per capsule.

If you don't need any additional stomach acid support at all, using just one capsule of HCl would cause a slight discomfort or warm sensation in the center of the chest. If you feel fine with one capsule, you may or may not need a higher dosage, so we begin to experiment slowly and steadily with increased intake to find the level at which your body indicates and excessive amount. Then your optimal dose is likely one less capsule. We explore each new dose across multiple meals to

allow learning about how meal circumstances and meal make-up change the dosage your body needs.

Protein-containing meals require more HCl support, and large animal portions usually require the most. You can develop an intuition about how to vary your intake.

Here are specific instructions for carrying out your own Low Stomach Acid Experiment. Don't hesitate to ask your healthcare practitioner any questions you may have.

- Start by taking one capsule of HCl *in the middle of* your typically largest meal of the day and during a meal that contains protein. Note the timing is key: don't take the capsule at the beginning of or after the meal.
- If you do not feel a slight burning sensation or anything undesired, begin taking one capsule with every protein-containing meal for the next 2 full days (~6 meals). You may indeed notice positive effect as this or higher doses e.g., less sense of fullness, higher post-meal energy, better bowel movements, reduction of acid reflux or indigestion. At this point, don't use HCl with a snack or a tiny meal (e.g., a few slices of turkey)
- If you notice no negative reactions after 6 meals with one capsule, increase the number of capsules with each meal to two. Again, continue to take them in the middle of the meal, *with a few bites of food in between*.
- Continue increasing the number of capsules by one, every 2-3 days, using up to eight capsules with each meal if necessary. These dosages may seem large, but a normally functioning stomach manufactures considerably more.
- As a reminder, **you will know if you have taken too many capsules with that particular meal** if you experience any of the following: warmth, tingling, or burning in the chest, diarrhea, neck or back achiness, heartburn, or any unusual symptom that makes you uncomfortable or uneasy. With this slow, progressive experiment, you are unlikely to experience anything alarming, but if you feel uncomfortable, you may quickly neutralize the higher acidity by drinking ½ teaspoon of baking soda stirred into ½ cup water.
- Remember, the **goal is to find that excessive level**. When you do, stop using HCl for the remainder of that day and then resume the next day using a dose that is one capsule less than the dose that gave you discomfort. If you have noticed no symptoms up to 8 capsules, stay at that dose for now.
- Again, most people will find that different meal circumstances and composition will dictate a variable dose that you can learn to master over time. Some people find they require 6-8 capsules with every meal while others find they only need 1-2 and only with sizable protein-containing meals. **Stomach acid is important, so be consistent in your use of HCl**
- As you work with your healthcare practitioner to address the root causes of your unique case of low stomach acid, **your own innate stomach acid secretion will likely improve or return**. You will then notice that your body does not tolerate the previously typical HCl dose and will give you symptoms, indicating a need to cut back on the dose. Try to be

patient as your body heals. Some individuals do need to supplement with HCl long-term to support optimal wellness.

Cautions and Considerations

Individuals who have had insufficient stomach acid for some time often have had a **thinning of the protective mucosal lining of the stomach**. Talk to your healthcare practitioner about your unique circumstances. You may need to support the repair and build-up of this protective barrier *before increasing stomach acidity*. This is especially true of individuals who have been using acid-suppressing medication (especially PPI's). If you have several signs/symptoms of hypochlorhydria and yet find that just one capsule of supplemental HCl causes a burning sensation, you likely need to support your mucosal lining for 2-3 weeks and then resume HCl use.

Do not use HCl if you are taking certain medications that may weaken or damage the mucosal lining of the stomach, including steroids (e.g., prednisone) and NSAIDs (e.g. ibuprofen, aspirin, diclofenac). There is an increased risk of gastritis or GI bleeding.

Use of HCl is **contraindicated in individuals with Barrett's Esophagus, gastritis or ulcers** as it can inflame tissue that is not being adequately protected.

Do not open HCl capsules or try to mix the contents into any other foods or beverages. Take the capsule intact.

Only use HCl in the middle of meals, not at the beginning or the end of meals.

Be sure to **take a bite or two of food soon after each capsule is swallowed** to ensure it is well pushed down into the stomach. A capsule that gets stuck in the esophagus can be uncomfortable.

Rare individuals will not be able to tolerate HCl at all due to a sensitivity to one of the ingredients. In these cases, a Tbsp or two of apple cider vinegar or lemon juice mixed with a ½ cup water may be sipped on throughout a meal to help increase stomach acidity. This approach is less targeted and intense than HCl but appropriate for these sensitive individuals.