

TAKE THE HCL CHALLENGE

This simple test can help you determine whether you have the appropriate level of hydrochloric acid in your stomach for optimal digestion. Don't do this test however, if you have ulcers.

Instructions:

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

You should feel a burning or warming sensation in your stomach or upper abdomen, which indicates you have enough HCL and you can stop taking the pills. You may also feel slightly "acidic," as though you have indigestion, which also means you probably have enough stomach acid.

If you don't feel anything after taking the BH, repeat the process the following day with 2 pills before your largest meal. If you feel the warming or burning sensation, take only 1 pill the next day. Keep doing this daily until the warming sensation returns. You can then stop taking the pills. You may choose to continue supplementing at each meal (3 times a day) with a digestive enzyme that contains HCL along with enzymes. Choices include: UltraZyme (Douglas Labs); Metagest (Metagenics); Digest (Genestra).

Note: You should feel something after taking one or two pills – this is normal. If you must increase the dosage beyond this point, your stomach acid level is too low. Then your aim is to discover just how low, so keep going...

If you do not feel anything after 2 pills, take 3 pills the next day before your largest meal. If you feel the burning or warming sensation, take 2 pills the next day and remain at two pills until you feel the sensation return, then drop to 1 pill the day after that. Remain at one until the sensation returns again, and then stop.

If you do not feel anything at three pills, keep increasing each day until you reach a maximum of 10 pills. Keep taking 10 pills (i.e., 5 before and 5 after beginning to eat your largest meal) until you feel a sensation – then drop down to 9, 8, 7 and so on, as outlined above. Be patient and stick with it. Correcting a hydrochloric acid deficiency may take a few weeks or even months.

Your goal is to gradually grow accustomed to the HCL capsules and then wean yourself off the capsules once the proper acid level has been restored. This process will ensure you have just the right amount of stomach acid – not too much and not too little – for excellent nutrient absorption, one of the key secrets to looking and feeling your best every day.