



The Health Benefits Of An Alkaline Diet



Dr. Kate Thomsen and Silky

Nourishing the body with the nutrients needed for health involves work and it's not just the muscles needed to walk to the refrigerator and open the door. The process of digestion and absorption take energy – muscles, enzymes, and transport functions are needed. Some types of nutrients require more work than others to digest. Some foods give us very little back. We know that our modern diet has many nutrient-poor foods – giving us very little useful building blocks to work with. But nutrient density is only one property of foods that can contribute to health. The acid content of foods is also a property that deserves attention.

Nutrients can be classified as acid or alkaline. You remember from school that an acid gives up a hydrogen ion when dissolved in water. The pH of a substance is the potential for freeing Hydrogen ions. An acid substance has a pH of 0 – 6. Strong acids are corrosive. Neutral substances have a pH of 7 and alkaline substances have a pH of 8 – 14. The body functions best when the overall pH of the internal biochemistry is around 7.39. The optimum

pH of the blood is 7.36 – 7.42. Illness results when the blood pH is above or below this range and death results if the pH falls below 7.0 or above 7.8.

Foods can be classified as alkaline or acid based on their ash content when burned. But the overall effect that a meal has on body biochemistry is more complicated than that. Foods are broken down into constituents that are presented to the kidney as acid forming compounds or base forming compounds. Acid forming compounds will need to be neutralized by more basic compounds. Foods that are high in acid ions (sulfates, chlorides, phosphorous...) include proteins (especially animal flesh) and grains. Foods that can neutralize these have more alkaline ions (sodium, potassium, calcium, magnesium...) and these include most fruits and vegetables. The net acid or base load of a food is called its PRAL (potential acid renal load) score. The PRAL of a modern Western diet is high and this puts our bodies in a chronic state of acidity. A low grade chronic metabolic acidosis results and this is contributing to our epidemic of chronic disease.

The body's attempt to maintain a constant neutral pH in the face of an acidic environment has several consequences. The strong base, calcium is released from the bones to neutralize the acid. The bones weaken and osteoporosis results. There is good epidemiologic evidence that cultures eating more alkaline diets have little

to no osteoporosis regardless of their extra calcium or Vitamin D intake. The amino acid glutamine from skeletal muscle binds hydrogen ions and, like calcium, can neutralize the body's acidosis. A chronic acid load can cause muscle breakdown by liberating glutamine causing a net muscle loss. Mild hypothyroidism and elevated cortisol are also consequences of chronic low grade acidosis.

Here are a few things to try.

- Get some pH papers (available from Amazon.com) and check your first morning urine pH. Your goal is to see a pH in the range of 6.5 – 7.5. If it is lower than 6.5 you are too acid.
- You can Google the PRAL scores and try to manipulate your foods such that your meals are net neutral or slightly more negative. (High PRAL scores are the most acid. The more negative the score, the more basic.)
- Many of us can decrease (not necessarily eliminate) some animal protein and grains from our diets. We typically overindulge in these foods.
- Simply adding more vegetables to our diets will also move our PRAL scores down and the phytonutrients, low fat, low calorie, minerals, and fiber in them will contribute to our better health in numerous other ways!



Dr Kate Thomsen has a holistic health practice in Pennington, NJ. She is board certified in Family

Dr. Kate Thomsen WOMEN'S HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Pennington, NJ

**Learn How to Eat a More Alkaline Based Diet
Reduce Your Risk of Chronic Disease
Join Dr Kate's Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes
(TLC) Program**

✿ The CDC and NIH have recommended therapeutic lifestyle changes as the first line of therapy for individuals with or at risk of chronic diseases (heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, diabetes, high cholesterol, osteoporosis...)

✿ Our 12 week program is based on extensive scientific research. It is medically supervised and includes:

- Initial testing and follow-up testing
- Individual consultations
- Meal plans based on your unique body composition
- A personal guidebook
- Weekly follow-up sessions
- Nutritional supplements

✿ Your body will have to do less neutralizing of acid foods, allowing you to keep more calcium and glutamine thus preserving more bone and muscle tissue AND

✿ You will feel so much better as well!!!

Call the office for an appointment or more information

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Medicine and Integrative/Holistic Medicine. For more information visit online at www.drkatethomsen.com. For information about appointments, TLC, or our upcoming group programs, call the office at 609-818-9700.

*** Fall Detox Program starts October 6, 2011. This is our most popular class and space is limited. Call the office for more information.*

"Adopting a new healthier lifestyle can involve changing diet to include more fresh fruit and vegetables as well as increasing levels of exercise."

—LINFORD CHRISTIE