

Leyla weighs in: Acidic versus alkalinizing foods

You may have heard that eating more “alkalinizing” foods versus acid-forming foods is desirable for optimal health. But what does this really mean, and is it true? Is eating more vegetables and fruit (which are alkaline-promoting) while eating fewer acidic foods the way to go for a healthy body and good bone health?

In our ancestral diet, there was a balance of acid-forming and alkalinizing foods. The animals our hunter-gatherer ancestors killed and ate, and the leaves, vegetables and roots they gathered fell into either category of acid-forming or alkalinizing foods. Proteins are acidic, and produce, seeds and most nuts are alkaline.

The natural fats inherent in our food for the most part are neutral, neither acidic nor alkaline.



In our modern diet, which began with the dawn of agriculture, we have two additional food groups: grains and dairy. Both of these food groups are mostly acid-forming (with the exception of yogurt and whey). Most beans and legumes are also acid-promoting.

So how important is all this? Read on.

pH is a measure of acid and alkaline in the body on a scale of zero to 14. The lower the pH, the greater the acidity; the higher the pH, the greater the alkalinity. *The acidic or alkaline nature of the foods we eat has no influence on our serum pH.* We are happily balanced at a healthy 7.4 pH, which is slightly alkaline. Our metabolisms function elegantly to maintain this blood level pH, or we would not exist. Indeed, a small shift in either direction would have dire consequences. Secretion of an acid or alkaline urine by the kidneys is the mechanism that helps the body to maintain a constant pH.

On the other hand, *urine pH* is affected by diet, diseases and certain medications. The range for urine pH is generally between 4.5 and 8.0. Urine that is at the extreme high or low end of pH is a risk factor for kidney stones. As you can see, a mid-range pH is desirable.

Keep in mind that urine pH levels are an imprecise indicator of the overall pH of the body, so don't bother with urine pH strips. It's simplistic to think that just by eating an “Alkaline Diet” we can invariably improve our health.

To your health!