

Acid/Base Principles

A basic understanding of the importance of a balanced pH is central in developing a healthy individualized diet. Such understanding will enable one to eat those foods which support rather than inadvertently challenge or stress our body's healthy function.

The 75 trillion cells that cooperate collectively as one's body are continuously bathed in what is often called an 'internal ocean,' roughly ten gallons of fluid, or about 70% of the body's total mass. Excepting for the acid contents of the stomach, all of this intracellular fluid, extracellular fluid, blood, lymph, bile, saliva, urine, etc... must be maintained within an alkaline range for the lively cells to function normally. For example, the required pH for the blood is between 7.35 and 7.45. When this ratio shifts even slightly, the body goes through rapid metabolic and respiratory responses to maintain the slightly alkaline environment. Beyond this absolute equilibrium convulsions, coma, and death will ensue.

Obviously the body does a tremendous job of maintaining pH balance daily, though not always without discomfort. Proteins produce sulfuric and phosphoric acid. Carbohydrates and fats produce acetic acids. And exercise produces lactic acid. When more acid has been generated than can easily be eliminated through the lungs, colon, or kidneys, the body will secondarily resort to elimination through the skin, sinuses and other mucous membranes. The common cold and many other symptomatic conditions are just this, our internal intelligence re-establishing a healthy balance.

Knowing these things prompts one to adopt a diet that supports and eases the body's workload. This can be done by supplying adequate quantities of alkaline forming organic minerals. The base minerals, primarily sodium, calcium, magnesium, potassium and iron, among other things form buffering salts. Some acids, like the lactic acid generated by exercise can be eliminated through increased respiration leaving our alkaline reserves intact, but dietary acids require buffering before being excreted through the channels of elimination, further acidifying the system by robbing our bodies of these elements.

The foods that contain the greatest percentage of these alkaline

forming minerals are the foods that help the body neutralize the poisons generated from excess protein, stress, and refined foods. These neutralizers can be used immediately if necessary, or they can be stored as part of the alkaline reserve. Adopted gradually, a diet of approximately 80% alkaline forming foods will help build up this reserve and move one in the direction of greater balance and health.

The chart opposite places different foods along the alkaline/acid continuum, allowing easy reference and Discernment of the influences foods are having on the body's overall balance. With modest practice this understanding opens into simple and natural food choices, potentially bringing control and stress reduction to our bodies.