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# Digestion: Upper GI - Healing Protocols

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**Medical Disclaimer:** The information in this presentation is not intended to replace a one-on-one relationship with a qualified health care professional and is not intended as medical advice. It is intended as a sharing of knowledge and information from the research and experience of Dr. Ritamarie Loscalzo, [drritamarie.com](http://drritamarie.com), and the experts who have contributed. We encourage you to make your own health care decisions based upon your research and in partnership with a qualified health care professional.



# Supporting Digestive Function

## Diet and Lifestyle

- ✓ Breathe and relax before eating
- ✓ Chew thoroughly
- ✓ Eat in a calm relaxed state
- ✓ Eat slowly and focus on the meal
- ✓ Drink warm water ½ hour before meals
- ✓ Eat living foods that supply enzymes
- ✓ Avoid gluten and dairy
- ✓ Probiotic foods (sauerkraut, kim chi, cultured veggies, kombucha, coconut kefir, non-dairy yogurt)
- ✓ Avoid sugar, refined carbohydrates, alcohol

## Supplements

- ✓ Probiotic supplementation (minimum 30 billion organisms per day)
- ✓ Take digestive enzymes the middle to end of each meal - away from any stomach acid supplementation



# Healing Factors For The Stomach



- ✓ Bitters
- ✓ HCl supplementation if needed
- ✓ Pepsin
- ✓ Lemon juice
- ✓ Apple cider vinegar
- ✓ Extract of black pepper
- ✓ Glutamine
- ✓ Licorice



# Bitter Herbs to Stimulate Digestion

## Actions of Bitters

- ✓ Stimulate HCl, pepsin, mucous in upper GI
- ✓ Can stimulate bile, pancreatic enzymes, and hormones
- ✓ Can enhance immunity
- ✓ Decongest portal vein and decrease varicosity
- ✓ Enhance immunity
- ✓ Calm the nervous system
- ✓ Stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system
- ✓ Lower blood glucose

## Some Common Bitters

- ✓ Licorice
- ✓ Hops
- ✓ Milk thistle
- ✓ Gentian
- ✓ Orange peel
- ✓ Dandelion
- ✓ Goldenseal
- ✓ Oregon grape
- ✓ Chicory
- ✓ Yarrow
- ✓ Mugwort



# Demulcent Herbs – Soothe and Heal

## What they do

- ✓ Soothe the GI tract
- ✓ Rebuild the mucous layer
- ✓ Anti-inflammatory
- ✓ Lubricate the digestive tract
- ✓ Nourish body fluids and tissues

## Who they are

- ✓ Licorice
- ✓ Marshmallow
- ✓ Slippery elm
- ✓ Comfrey
- ✓ Irish moss
- ✓ Cinnamon
- ✓ Chamomile
- ✓ Fenugreek
- ✓ Jujube dates
- ✓ Plantain



# Pre-Meal Ritual to Optimize Digestion and Absorption

- Stop
- Look
- Tune into your heart
- Breathe fully and deeply
- Feel sincere appreciation



You Need to DO This **EVERY** Time You Put Food into Your Body





# Action Plan For Upper Digestive Tract

- ✓ Bitters 15 minutes before meal
- ✓ Pre-meal ritual
- ✓ Enzymes
- ✓ Chew thoroughly
- ✓ Gut soothing herbs
- ✓ Stay calm and present at all meals





# Upper GI Protocol Documents





## Digestion Protocols: Hypochlorhydria



Hypochlorhydria refers to a condition where the production of gastric acid in the stomach is low. It is associated with various other medical problems. A similar condition, achlorhydria, is when the production of gastric acid is absent.

From approximately age 35 and on, most people begin to secrete less stomach acid. By the time people reach their 50's, it is estimated that over 50% of people have low stomach acid.

People with a history of helicobacter pylori infection (the bacteria involved in stomach ulcers) and/or who have used protein pump inhibitor medications long-term are more likely to have hypochlorhydria.

Many of the symptoms of hypochlorhydria resemble excess stomach acid and they are mistakenly put on acid blockers, which makes the problem worse.





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## Digestion Protocols: Hypochlorhydria

### Symptoms

- ☐ Upset stomach, diarrhea
- ☐ Constipation
- ☐ Feeling full after a small meal
- ☐ Anemia, iron deficiency
- ☐ B12 deficiency
- ☐ Skin rashes like acne or eczema
- ☐ Weak, brittle, or peeling nails
- ☐ Bloating, gas, and burping after meals
- ☐ Heartburn or reflux
- ☐ Dry, thin hair and skin
- ☐ Tendency towards allergies
- ☐ Candida
- ☐ Chronic fatigue





## Digestion Protocols: Hypochlorhydria

### Evaluation

- ☐ Symptom survey
- ☐ Heidelberg Gastric Analysis Test: <http://www.phcapsule.com>
- ☐ HCl challenge
- ☐ Stool analysis for candida, parasites, and other imbalances
- ☐ IgG food sensitivity testing

### Common Causes of Hypochlorhydria

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bacterial infection (H. pylori) | <input type="checkbox"/> Pernicious anemia  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aging                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Hypothyroidism   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adrenal fatigue                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Autoimmune conditions  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chronic stress                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Chronic use of drugs, such as stomach acid blockers and steroids |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol consumption             | <input type="checkbox"/> Overeating of animal fats and poor quality fats                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food sensitivities              | <input type="checkbox"/> Diet low in protein  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gastrointestinal infections     | <input type="checkbox"/> Drinking water with meals  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gastritis                       |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gastric ulcer                   |   |





## Digestion Protocols: Hypochlorhydria

### Lifestyle Habits to Improve Hypochlorhydria

- ☐ Chew thoroughly
- ☐ Don't lie down after eating
- ☐ Avoid overeating
- ☐ Eat small meals
- ☐ Stay hydrated
- ☐ Don't drink ice water
- ☐ Avoid the use of acid-blocking drugs; ask your doctor first
- ☐ Avoid drinking water with meals
- ☐ Decrease the amount of meat protein
- ☐ Increase consumption of raw fruits and vegetables for digestive enzymes
- ☐ Stress reduction techniques such as biofeedback, hypnosis, or counseling
- ☐ Include acupuncture to help restore digestive fire to help breakdown food





## Digestion Protocols: Hypochlorhydria

### Dietary Habits That Can Improve Hypochlorhydria

- ☐ Chew thoroughly
- ☐ Avoid overeating
- ☐ Take high doses of Vitamin C at meals
- ☐ Include flax, chia, and hemp seeds for their omega-3 fatty acids
- ☐ Eliminate dairy
- ☐ Eliminate gluten
- ☐ Slowly increase your fiber intake
- ☐ Stay hydrated
- ☐ Eat more garlic
- ☐ Increase probiotic foods like sauerkraut, kefir, and cultured vegetables
- ☐ Increase dark, leafy greens
- ☐ Avoid trans and hydrogenated fats
- ☐ Avoid refined sugars and artificial sweeteners
- ☐ Avoid caffeine
- ☐ Avoid nightshades such as tomatoes, eggplant, and potatoes







## **Digestion Protocols: Hypochlorhydria**

### **Herbs and Nutrients to Improve Hypochlorhydria**

- ☐ Aloe vera juice
- ☐ Apple cider vinegar
- ☐ Betaine HCl and pepsin capsules
- ☐ Bitter green juice before meals, i.e., dandelion, arugula, and kale
- ☐ Bitter herbs, i.e., gentian and dandelion
- ☐ Clove oil
- ☐ Digestive enzymes
- ☐ Garlic
- ☐ Ginger tea
- ☐ Grapefruit seed extract, herbal anti-microbial
- ☐ L-glutamine
- ☐ Minerals, i.e., calcium, iron, and zinc
- ☐ Oregano oil
- ☐ Papaya
- ☐ Peppermint oil
- ☐ Probiotics
- ☐ Vitamin B complex, especially B3 and B12
- ☐ Vitamin C
- ☐ Wheat grass







## HCl Challenge Test for Optimizing Stomach Acid

**Caution:** Do not do this test without first consulting a qualified medical professional familiar with your personal health history if you have or have had stomach related health conditions such as GERD, ulcers, or gastritis. Taking HCl, even if you need it, can aggravate these conditions and result in increased pain and burning.

### Purpose

This test is used to determine the integrity of your stomach lining and its ability to produce HCl (Hydrochloric Acid). HCl is the acid produced by your stomach to initiate protein digestion and mineral absorption. Without adequate HCl, you will not efficiently extract nutrients from your food, no matter how excellent your diet may be.

This test helps you to identify whether you are producing enough HCl to efficiently digest protein and minerals. It helps to determine the amount of supplemental HCl required or to assess the effectiveness of food and herbal approaches to improving digestion in your stomach.



## Procedure

### Day 1:

Take **ONE** 500-650 mg capsule (not tablet) containing both hydrochloric acid (HCL) and approximately 150 mg of pepsin after you've eaten a few bites of food at the beginning of a substantially complex meal, i.e. your largest meal of the day. **Do not test yet on simple meals** like fruit or a light, low fat salad without added concentrated protein or a simple fruit green smoothie.

**Do not take on an empty stomach or after meals  
and do not open capsules and take as a powder.**

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### HCl Challenge Test for Optimizing Stomach Acid

Observe how you feel throughout the meal and during the hour following. If you have discomfort (burning or warm sensation), **STOP** and proceed to *How to Handle Stomach Discomfort* then read the *Interpretation* paragraph below.

Continue with the same dose of HCl for each substantial meal that day, observing carefully for symptoms. During testing, **only take HCl at your larger meals** that contain concentrated foods (i.e. nuts, seeds, grains, legumes, fish, meat, eggs or dairy). During the initial phase of testing, do not take if your meal is just fruit, a smoothie or salad.





## HCl Challenge Test for Optimizing Stomach Acid

### Day 2:

Take 2 capsules at the **beginning** of your first complex meal. Make it a meal that's similar in complexity to test meals from previous days. If you have **discomfort** (burning or warm sensation), **STOP** and proceed to *How to Handle Stomach Discomfort* then read the *Interpretation* paragraph below.

### Day 3:

Take 3 capsules at the **beginning** of your first complex meal. Make it a meal that's similar in complexity to test meals from previous days. If you have **discomfort** (burning or warm sensation), **STOP** and proceed to *How to Handle Stomach Discomfort* then read the *Interpretation* paragraph below.

### Day 4:

Take 4 capsules at the **beginning** of your first complex meal. Make it a meal that's similar in complexity to test meals from previous days. If you have **discomfort** (burning or warm sensation), **STOP** and proceed to *How to Handle Stomach Discomfort* then read the *Interpretation* paragraph below.





## HCl Challenge Test for Optimizing Stomach Acid

HCl Challenge Test Tracking			
Name			
Date	# HCl Capsules	Meal	Reaction





## **HCl Challenge Test for Optimizing Stomach Acid**

### **How to Handle Stomach Discomfort**

If at any point you experience warmth, discomfort, or burning, drink 16 ounces of purified water to quench the reaction and stop taking HCl until the discomfort subsides.

If that's not sufficient, there are several options for pain relief -- preferred are a) and b).

- a) Drink 1 teaspoon slippery elm dissolved in 8 ounces warm water. Continue every 15 minutes until pain subsides, usually within an hour.
- b) Drink ¼ cup Aloe vera juice.
- c) Drink ¼ teaspoon baking soda in 4 ounces water.
- d) Take an antacid like Alka Seltzer Gold.





## HCl Challenge Test for Optimizing Stomach Acid

### Interpretation

If you had pain with the first dose, it's likely that either you don't need HCl or you have disruption of your stomach's protective mucous lining as in an ulcer or gastritis. If you have symptoms of low stomach acid as indicated on your symptom questionnaire and discomfort with taking HCl, you might try a month or two of DGL licorice and slippery elm to soothe and heal your stomach lining combined with bitters as described in step 2 below.

If you made it to Day 4 without discomfort, you likely have a severe deficit in HCl and have been experiencing significant digestive inefficiency as a result.







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## HCl Challenge Test for Optimizing Stomach Acid

### Corrective Action

Choose one of the following actions:

#### #1: Supplement with HCL

- ☐ With each of your heavier or more complex meals, take the number of HCl capsules you took the day BEFORE you experienced warmth or discomfort. Take the first HCl capsule at the beginning of the meal, after a few bites of food. After each HCL capsule, take a few bites of food before taking the next. If you take digestive enzymes, take those at the end of the meal for best results.
- ☐ With your lighter meals, retest starting from Day 1 and determine the optimal dose.
- ☐ Take at MOST 4 capsules.







## HCl Challenge Test for Optimizing Stomach Acid

### #2: Stimulate your own HCl production with bitter herbs, juices, and foods

- ☐ Consume dandelion, arugula, and other bitter greens, either as juice or whole leaves chewed to juice and swished in mouth about 15 minutes before each meal.
- ☐ Consume bitters formula as a tincture, taken 15 minutes before each meal and swished.

### #3 **\*\*Preferred\*\*** Take HCl AND bitters

- ☐ Take both HCl and bitters so that as you replenish your HCl and get the benefit of improved protein and mineral digestion; you will also restore your body's ability to make HCl.





## HCl Challenge Test for Optimizing Stomach Acid

### For all Methods

- ☐ **Important:** Regardless of which option you choose, it's advisable to also supplemental with zinc as it's important for the production of HCl and is not well absorbed in low HCl states.
- ☐ Start with about 30 mg per day of zinc picolinate or zinc citrate or 1 teaspoon liquid zinc.
- ☐ If you have indications of long standing mineral or protein deficiencies, you might also consider an amino acid or protein drink supplement while you are getting things balanced as well as a liquid multi-mineral formula, taken on an empty stomach.

**You should not go above the maximal HCl dose, which is approximately four HCl 650 mg capsules unless under supervision.**

**Caution:** Do not do this test without first consulting a qualified medical professional familiar with your personal health history if you have or have had stomach related health conditions such as GERD, ulcers, or gastritis. Taking HCl, even if you need it, can aggravate these conditions and result in increased pain and burning.





## **HCl Challenge Test for Optimizing Stomach Acid**

### **Brief Summary of Major Signs of Low Stomach Acid**

- Digestive woes immediately after eating like burping, gas, and bloating
- Bouts of nausea and/or unexplained diarrhea
- Soft brittle or peeling nails
- Parallel ridges on fingernails indicate malabsorption
- Dry skin on lower leg may indicate malabsorption
- Diffuse hair loss in women
- Chronically coated tongue
- Chronic bad breath
- Food allergies
- Non-responsive to supplements and dietary efforts
- Muscle cramps
- Heavy, full sensation after eating (called delayed gastric emptying)





## HCl Challenge Test for Optimizing Stomach Acid

### Blood Lab Scores That Are Suggestive (Not Diagnostic) Of Insufficient Stomach Acid

- Low total protein, globulin, ferritin, calcium, magnesium, BUN
- B12 below 350 pg/ml
- Complete Blood Count (CBC): MCV over 93
- Stool testing: Imbalance of normal gut flora and overgrowth of unfriendly critters, known as dysbiosis, and lots of yeast
- Hair analysis: 5-6 low minerals (not including sodium and potassium)

**Disclaimer:** The information in this document has not been evaluated by the FDA is not intended to diagnose, cure, prevent or treat any disease. The information presented is for educational purposes only with the intent of teaching you how to properly nourish and balance our body and trigger your innate self-healing mechanisms.

This information is not intended as a substitute for the advice or medical care of a qualified health care professional and you should seek the advice of your health care professional before undertaking any dietary or lifestyle changes, especially if you have any serious medical conditions or health concerns.







## **Digestion Protocols: Acid Reflux Protocol for Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD) aka “Heartburn”**



Heartburn is most often caused by too little acid in the stomach, rather than too much acid as most people believe.

When there is not enough acid to break down your food, it tends to sit in your stomach too long. If the lower esophageal valve is not functioning properly, the stomach contents can rise up into the esophagus.

Your esophagus doesn't have the protective mucous membrane the stomach does and the acidic contents of the stomach burn, eventually eroding the lining and resulting in reflux esophagitis.





## **Digestion Protocols: Acid Reflux Protocol for Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD) aka “Heartburn”**

### **Evaluation**

- ☐ Symptom survey
- ☐ Blood chemistry: Lots of lows, including iron, ferritin, protein, globulin, phosphorus, BUN, calcium, vitamin B12
- ☐ CBC: High MCV
- ☐ H. pylori testing: Blood or stool (BioHealth has a very sensitive stool test)
- ☐ Low zinc on zinc assay test
- ☐ Urinary indican
- ☐ Food sensitivity testing
- ☐ Gastro-test to assess stomach pH ([www.hdccorp.com](http://www.hdccorp.com))





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## **Digestion Protocols: Acid Reflux Protocol for Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD) aka “Heartburn”**

### **Common Causes of Acid Reflux**

- ☐ Low stomach acid
- ☐ Overeating
- ☐ Eating too fast or on the run
- ☐ Excess caffeine
- ☐ Excess sugar or refined carbohydrates
- ☐ Nicotine
- ☐ Medications
- ☐ Food allergies and sensitivities







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## **Digestion Protocols: Acid Reflux Protocol for Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD) aka “Heartburn”**

### **Lifestyle Habits to Heal Acid Reflux**

- ☐ Don't eat late at night
- ☐ Don't overconsume fluids with meals
- ☐ Eat more slowly
- ☐ Chew food thoroughly
- ☐ Don't recline for a couple of hours after eating
- ☐ Avoid tight fitting clothing
- ☐ Avoid exercise within a couple of hours after eating
- ☐ Breathe and relax before eating





## **Digestion Protocols: Acid Reflux Protocol for Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD) aka “Heartburn”**

### **Dietary Habits that Can Heal Acid Reflux**

- ☐ Avoid excessively cold beverages
- ☐ Avoid caffeine and sugar
- ☐ Avoid gluten
- ☐ Avoid chocolate, citrus, tomatoes, onions, garlic, peppers, peppermint, and any other foods that you find irritating during the healing phase
- ☐ Increase mucilaginous foods like flax, chia seed, and psyllium
- ☐ Increase probiotic foods like sauerkraut, kefir, and cultured vegetables
- ☐ Eat at least 6 ounces of carrots a day, or drink a cup or two of the juice





## Digestion Protocols: Acid Reflux Protocol for Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD) aka “Heartburn”

### Herbs and Nutrients to Heal Acid Reflux

- ☐ Aloe vera juice
- ☐ Apple cider vinegar  
(1 tablespoon in 8 ounces water)
- ☐ Betaine HCl treatment  
**(with caution and supervision)**
- ☐ Chamomile
- ☐ Cinnamon
- ☐ Comfrey
- ☐ Deglycyrrhizinated licorice (DGL)
- ☐ Fenugreek
- ☐ Irish moss
- ☐ Jujube dates
- ☐ Marshmallow
- ☐ Probiotics
- ☐ Slippery elm
- ☐ Vitamin A
- ☐ Vitamin B5 (pantothenic acid)
- ☐ Vitamin C

