



## 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.

### 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



## 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

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

## 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



## 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

## 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