

# The Alkaline Diet

From Cathy Wong, N.D., Your Guide to Alternative Medicine, About.com

Essentially, the alkaline diet is opposite the high protein, high fat, low carb diets that are currently in vogue. Most people have never heard of alkaline-acid balance, but many holistic doctors and nutritionists consider a properly balanced diet to be important to optimal health and preventing diseases such as cancer.

The theory behind an alkaline diet is that because our body's pH level is slightly alkaline, with a normal range of 7.36 to 7.44, our diet should reflect this and also be slightly alkaline. An imbalanced diet high in acidic foods such as animal protein, sugar, caffeine, and processed foods tends to disrupt this balance. It can deplete the body of alkaline minerals such as sodium, potassium, magnesium, and calcium, making people prone to chronic and degenerative disease.

Thorough scientific studies are lacking on the alkaline diet. Many conventional doctors do not believe in the alkaline diet.

## Who is this diet for?

This diet is for people who feel unwell on a high fat, low carb diet. It is also for people lead stressful lives and who consume large amounts of acidifying foods such as protein, sugar, processed food, cereals, starches, and caffeine, with little alkalizing vegetables.

## What are the symptoms of excess acidity?

- Low energy, chronic fatigue
- Excess mucous production
- Nasal congestion
- Frequent colds, flus, and infections
- Nervous, stressed, irritable, anxious, agitated
- Weak nails, dry hair, dry skin
- Formation of cysts, such as ovarian cysts, polycystic ovaries, benign breast cysts (fibrocystic breasts)
- Headaches
- Joint pain or arthritis
- Neuritis
- Muscle pain
- Feel better after a detox diet
- Hives
- Leg cramps and spasms
- Gastritis, acid indigestion

Medical doctors try to test the acidity or alkalinity of the body tissues and cells by analyzing the blood. Pioneers Carey Reams, Harold Hawkins, or Emanuel Revici developed methods to measure urine pH and other factors such as saliva pH. Modern proponents of the alkaline diet look at the pH of blood, saliva, and urine, in addition to health symptoms and other factors.

## What are the guidelines of this diet?

An alkaline diet is composed of approximately 75-80% alkaline foods and 20-25% acid foods.

- Alkaline Foods*  
Higher alkaline are better

Vegetables -- High alkaline: wheat grass, barley grass, alfalfa sprouts, broccoli sprouts, other types of sprouts, cucumber, kale, parsley, sea vegetables. Moderate alkaline: avocado, arugula, beets, bell peppers, broccoli, cabbage, celery, collard, endive, garlic, ginger, green beans, lettuce, mustard greens, okra, onion, spinach, tomato. Slightly alkaline: artichoke, asparagus, brussels sprouts, carrot, cauliflower, kohlrabi, leeks, peas, rhubarb, rutabaga, turnip, watercress, zucchini

Fruit -- Slightly alkaline: coconut, grapefruit, lemon, lime

Beans and legumes -- Moderate alkaline: lima beans, soy beans, white beans. Slightly alkaline: Lentils, tofu.

Nuts, seeds, oils -- High alkaline: pumpkin seeds. Slightly alkaline: almond, borage oil, coconut oil, cod liver oil, evening primrose oil, fish oil, flaxseed oil, olive oil, sesame seeds.

Grains -- buckwheat, quinoa, spelt

Condiments -- Moderate alkaline: cayenne, red chili pepper, sea salt, stevia. Most herbs and spices are

somewhat alkaline.

Dairy -- Slightly alkaline: goat milk

**Acidifying Foods**

Lower acid are better. Most acidic are worst

Dairy and Dairy Substitutes -- Slightly acid: cow's milk, rice milk, soymilk. Most acid: cheese (including cottage cheese, hard cheese, aged cheese, and goat cheese), ice cream, soy cheese, whey protein powder.

Animal meat -- Moderate acid: wild fish. Most acid: beef, chicken, duck, eggs, farmed fish, gelatin, lobster, organ meat, pheasant, pork, poultry, seafood, squid, turkey, veal, venison.

Grains -- Slightly acid: amaranth, millet. Moderate acid: oats, rice (brown rice, white rice), rye, wheat. Most acid: barley, corn, rye.

Beans and legumes -- Slightly acid: black beans, chickpeas, kidney beans.

Vegetables -- Most acidic: mushrooms, potatoes. Fruit -- Slightly acid: cantaloupe, dates (not dried), nectarines. Moderate acid: apple, apricot, banana, all berries, figs (fresh), grape, honeydew, mango, orange, papaya, peach, persimmon, pineapple, tangerine, watermelon. Most acid: dried fruit.

Nuts, Seeds, and Oils -- Slightly acid: brazil nuts, flaxseeds, hazelnuts, pecans, sunflower seeds, sunflower oil, grapeseed oil. Moderate acid: butter, ghee, corn oil, margarine, walnuts. Most acid: cashews, peanuts, pistachios.

Condiments -- Moderate acid: ketchup, mayonnaise, table salt. Most acid: jam, mustard, soy sauce, vinegar, white sugar, aspartame, molasses, sugar cane, barley malt syrup, honey, maple syrup, brown rice syrup, yeast.

**Tips on alkalizing your diet**

1. Eat lots of vegetables and fruit
2. Squeeze lemon or lime into water as a beverage
3. Try to eat 1 cup of alkalizing greens daily, such as kale, mustard greens, or broccoli
4. Eat millet or quinoa as an alternative to wheat
5. Choose fish and lamb over beef
6. Use olive oil instead of vegetable oils
7. Try a greens powder
8. Learn to make a miso broth. Dissolve one teaspoon of miso into a cup of hot, not boiling, water.