

Know the *pH*acts!

One of the principles of Naturopathic Medicine is to identify the root cause of a person's condition or disease in order to achieve full and complete healing. To do this, Naturopathic Physicians work with the patient to gather information on their symptoms, lifestyle habits, stress levels and environmental factors. One of the most important pieces of the puzzle, and one that some people are completely unaware of, is the role our pH plays in our overall health.

What is pH?

pH (potential of Hydrogen) is a measure of the acidity or alkalinity of a solution and its hydrogen-ion concentration. Using a scale of 0-14, 7.0 is considered neutral and any value greater than 7.0 is alkaline, and values less than 7.0 are considered acidic. Pure water, to note, has a neutral pH of 7.0.

What is a healthy pH?

Your pH can be tested through blood, urine and saliva, with saliva being the most convenient and blood/urine sometimes being the most accurate. A normal urine pH averages about 6.0, while saliva should have a pH between 6.0 and 7.4. When the pH falls below this range, the body tries to buffer (alkalinize) the acids in attempt to keep the pH stable. When this balance is compromised, the body is susceptible to disease.



How do we become acidic?

One of the main reasons we become acidic, or develop acidosis, is due to our typical Western diet, which tends to be high in acid-producing animal products and lower in alkaline-producing fruits and vegetables. Coffee and soft drinks, refined flours and sugars, artificial sweeteners, and some medications can also lead to acidosis. Aside from an acidic diet, emotional stress, toxic overload, immune reactions or any process that deprives the cells of oxygen and other nutrients, can also result in an acidic pH.

Why is a healthy pH important?

Unless the body's pH level is slightly alkaline, the body cannot heal itself. Acids build up in the connective tissue, and in order to buffer the pH, the body will 'borrow' alkalizing minerals, such as calcium, from bone and vital organs to achieve balance. This can result in osteoporosis, as well as other conditions including, but not limited to, digestive problems, allergies, insomnia, migraines, vitamin/mineral malabsorption, rheumatoid arthritis and cancer.

Getting to the root cause of a condition is addressing any imbalances hindering one's optimal health. Know your pH and implement appropriate dietary and lifestyle changes to optimize its levels to help create an internal environment that promotes both cellular and total health.

References:

1. <http://www.naturalhealthschool.com/pH-balance.html>
2. <http://www.phbalancepascoe.com>