

A home stomach acid test isn't difficult to do, but it can provide an awful lot of important clues about your health.

Zinc deficiency, B6 deficiency, a history of H. pylori are some indications of low HCL.

Most natural health experts agree that low stomach acid levels are far more common than excess stomach acid levels.

In testing more than 2,000 patients at the Tahoma Clinic, Dr. Jonathan Wright and colleagues found that more than 90% of all heartburn and reflux patients had LOW stomach acid.

Low stomach acid leads to food fermentation and SIBO, both of which cause heartburn.

Low stomach acid levels reduce lower esophageal sphincter function, which allows acid to splash back into the esophagus, causing reflux.

This is why it's so important to understand the dynamics of stomach acid and health.

If your doctor doesn't run stomach acid level testing using the Heidelberg capsule test (which has been around since 1976), you do have options to do a home stomach acid test.

It is not as accurate as the Heidelberg capsule test but it's a good start.

Baking soda / bicarb test for stomach acid

If you ingest baking soda, it reacts with stomach acid to create gas. As such, you belch. That's it – that's the basis of the test.

A lot people choose to try this home stomach acid test first because it's very safe, low cost and you can get started right away.

I recommend performing the test 3 consecutive mornings to find an average response.

This isn't a perfect test, but it's worth a go because of its safety and simplicity.

1. Mix 1/4 teaspoon baking soda in 4 ounces cold water first thing in the morning before eating or drinking anything.
2. Drink the baking soda solution.
3. Time how long it takes you to belch.
4. If you have not belched within five minutes stop timing.

In theory, with properly functioning stomach acid you'll likely belch within 2-3 minutes.

Early and repeated belching may be due to excessive stomach acid (but don't confuse these burps with small little burps from swallowing air when drinking the solution).

Belching after 3 minutes likely indicates a low acid level.

Unfortunately, this test on its own is not accurate enough to rule out low stomach acid.

To rule out low stomach acid you will need to try the Heidelberg test (if you can find a doc who does it) or gastro-test.

Betaine HCL challenge test for low stomach acid

This test is also not 100% accurate, but when it's done properly it can be helpful.

1. Buy some Betaine HCL with pepsin
2. Eat a high protein meal of at least 6 ounces of meat (keep the amount standardised, and do the test 2-3 times on different days)
3. In the middle of the meal take 1 Betaine HCL pill
4. Finish your meal as normal and pay attention to your body

There's really only 2 outcomes from this test.

1. You won't notice anything, which means your stomach acid level is probably low.
2. Distress characterized by burning or hotness are signs that you don't have low acid levels.

Should you experience burning, don't worry. You can dissolve 1/4 tsp baking soda in some water and drink it to nullify the burning.

If you do this test 2-3 times and keep getting a 'positive' result, there is a good chance your stomach acid level is too low.

But remember, it's not 100% diagnostic by any means.

Record for 3 days belch time

	<1 minute	< 2 minutes	< 3 minutes	< 4 minutes	< 5 minutes
Day #1					
Day #2					
Day #3					

