

COS WE CARE. WE LIVE. WE HEAL. WE KNOW.
WE HELP. WE LAUGH. WE SAVE. WE'RE FAMILY.
WE'RE TASTY. WE'RE FRESH. WE'RE HEALTHY.



WE'RE ORGANIC. WE'RE BETTER FOR YOU.
WE'RE DIFFERENT. WE'RE GOODNESS. WE'RE
HONEST. WE'RE RELIABLE. WE'RE GREAT VALUE.

AUTUMN 2010

Balancing...

ACID & ALKALINITY FOR YOUR HEALTH by Steven Acuff

We all have more responsibility for our health than is generally understood. While there are some hereditary factors in illness, most health problems result from mistakes in food and lifestyle choices.

> A GOOD WAY TO KEEP THE BODY HEALTHY is to consciously balance acid and alkalinity (or base). However, this is not easy with the fast-food culture all around, full of acid-forming white flour buns, sugary cakes and pizza dough, as well as fizzy drinks that go with it. Animal protein (meat and cheese) also makes the body acidic when there are not enough alkaline vegetables and salads to keep things on an even keel. This ends in widespread, chronic overacidity (acidosis) that upsets the body's self-regulation and weakens overall health.

Over 100 years ago, the American biochemist McQuenn wrote *The Acid Death of the White Race*, a book that made overacidity the subject of medical research. Professor Schade at the University of Dresden, Germany proved in 1910 that acid accumulations trigger pain. Then other German researchers found a connection between acidosis and the condition of the body's connective tissue. One of their colleagues, Ragnar Berg from Sweden, later worked out an alkalising food concept. He claimed that the body needs four times more base than acid for general health and seven or eight times more when ill. This sounds much simpler than it is in reality, since there is no total agreement about what is acid-forming and what is alkalising.

Conventional medicine understands acidosis narrowly as an acidic condition of the blood. The body needs proper blood alkalinity to stay healthy, so it has several crucial mechanisms to insure this and stay alive. When acid rises, the body mobilises its alkaline reserves, especially calcium from the bones, to neutralise the acid and restore the balance. This leaves the body short on calcium and other alkaline minerals, but stops the immediate acid threat.

Holistic thinking about acidosis sees a systemic problem affecting the whole body down to the cellular level. Chronic overacidity even goes into the cells themselves, a harmful condition called intra-cellular acidosis. The body can overcome this with a healthy lifestyle of eating well, getting daily physical activity and sleeping enough. This gives the body the alkaline edge it needs. Without enough base, body functions weaken until illness follows sooner or later.

Since 1923 the study of acid and base has been founded on the Brönsted Theory. We understand an acid simply as a substance that gives off hydrogen ions while a base can take up hydrogen ions. The amount of hydrogen ions determines the pH level (potential of hydrogen). A high concentration of hydrogen ions makes an acidic condition (low pH) and a low concentration is alkaline (high pH). On the scale of 1-14, the neutral point is 7. Below the medium 7 is acidic and above it is alkaline.

Confusion abounds about acid and base because of a lot of outdated and misguided information. Brown rice and whole grains are healthful staples, yet there is a widely held, but mistaken belief that these wholesome foods are acid-forming. The high potassium content of brown rice makes it a good alkaliser, but most "experts" claim brown rice is acid-forming. The truth is that potassium raises alkalinity by displacing acidic hydrogen ions in the cells. The misunderstanding comes from the result of this action, which is to push the acidic hydrogen out of the cells and into the extra-cellular fluid.

We cannot measure the higher alkaline pH level inside the cells, but only the rising acid outside in the extra-cellular fluid, saliva and urine.

Hence the false conclusion that whole grains are acid-forming instead of being delighted that the harmful acid has left the delicate cells. Once outside the cells, the body can buffer the acid with excess base and rid itself of the acid through the kidneys. Optimally, potassium should be present inside the cell at a concentration 30-40 times higher than outside.

Barley grass and wheat grass are both rich in alkalising potassium and good to neutralise deep, intra-cellular acid. Those who want to save time and effort can take these greens as a ready-made powder mixed with water. Seaweed also alkalises well with plenty of calcium and magnesium. Available dried and packaged, seaweed is easy to cook in soups, stews and bean dishes. Aside from classics like sushi, seaweed is not common in Western food. However, Asia has a long tradition with seaweed dishes, such as strongly alkalising miso soup.



Cont overleaf

NEW IN...

> **THE POMEGRANATE.** Weleda has just released a new and exciting *Pomegranate Regenerating Body Care* range – exclusively developed for women 40 and beyond. Using organic pomegranate oil, extracts of golden millet and sunflower petals, scents of sandalwood, vanilla, neroli and blood orange, look no further for an exquisitely moisturising body oil, hand cream and body wash.



The name *pomegranate* derives from the latin *pomum* (apple) and *granatus* (seeded). It is native to Persia and has been cultivated throughout the Middle East, Asia and the Mediterranean region for several millennia.

The ancient city of Granada in Spain was renamed after the fruit in the Moorish period.

Every part of the pomegranate (the root, bark, flowers, fruit and leaves) has been used in Ayurvedic medicine for thousands of years. It is rich in Vitamin C, the B family but particularly B5, potassium and antioxidants and has been used as a symbol of life, fertility and power since antiquity.

The pomegranate has been so revered through the ages for its medicinal properties it features as part of the Coat of Arms for the following English colleges: British Medical Association, Royal College of Midwives, Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the Royal College of Physicians of London. It has featured in famous works of art by Sandro Botticello and Leonardo da Vinci.

Interestingly, Jewish tradition teaches that the pomegranate is a symbol of fruitfulness and righteousness. It is one of the fruits spoken of in the Promised Land; was embroidered on the hem of the robe worn by Aaron the Jewish High Priest and chains of pomegranates decorated the capitals of the two pillars in front of King Solomon's temple in Jerusalem. Some Jewish scholars believe that the pomegranate was the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden.

Are we starting to get the picture that the pomegranate was a significant fruit in man's history? From carbonised exocarp found in the ruins of Jericho, to turning up in Egyptian tombs or being mentioned in Mesopotamian cuneiform tablets, it has played a role both medicinally and symbolically.

Pomegranate Regenerating Body Care is a beautiful addition to the Weleda range of organic and biodynamic skin care. It promotes vibrant, firm, ageless skin. Trial packs are on special for \$14.95. More info www.weleda.com.au/body_care.

Pictures courtesy of Weleda. (ref: www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pomegranate)

> **NATURAL FOOD COLOURINGS.** Want to bake a cake, throw a children's party without the after effects of "hyped-up" kids? Try Hopper's natural food colourings, 100's & 1000's and sprinkles – all made from edible plant ingredients with no artificial colourings, flavourings or preservatives. Hey, let's party!

BALANCING ACID & ALKALINITY FOR YOUR HEALTH cont.

Another good Asian seasoning is the Japanese pickled salt plum called umeboshi. A bit of it adds not only delicious taste to food, but also a powerful dose of alkalinity.

Acid-forming animal protein is not a problem in modest amounts as a side dish rather than the main course. The body can do well with a steak now and then as long as there are plenty of alkalising vegetables and salad to buffer the acid. The key is to have enough alkaline buffer to balance the acid. Pulses (beans, lentils and chickpeas) are good for alkaline protein and they cost less than animal protein and take less energy to produce as well. Cooking pulses with kombu seaweed makes them more alkaline and also easier to digest. As a general alkaline meal guideline, we need whole grains and vegetables together with pulses and fresh salads for an extra bit of alkalinity. Fruit fits best as a snack.

HAVE YOU MET ERICA YET?

Erica Patrick is a fully qualified naturopath and is available for health advice on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10.00am to 4.00pm and Saturdays from 10.00am to 3.00pm. Take advantage of her excellent knowledge next time you are shopping at COS.

QUICK CHICKPEA DIP (HOMMUS)

- 1 tin chickpeas*
- 3-4 tab olive oil*
- 2 cloves garlic*
- ½ tsp cumin*
- pinch chilli flakes (optional)
- juice of ½ lemon*
- handful parsley*
- 1 tbsp tahini (optional)*
- ½ tsp fine celtic salt*

Whack all the above in a blender and press the button. Blend until creamy. If it's too thick, add more oil or lemon juice and taste for seasonings. Quick, easy and delicious. And for something special, serve with the sweet olive oil tortas from Spain.

*Organically grown and available from COS

