



ELITE

Personal Training and Fitness Solutions

HEALTH TOPIC OF THE WEEK

9/19: Alkaline Diet

Just Another Fad...
Debunking The Alkaline Diet

Introduction

The alkaline diet is based on the idea that replacing acid-forming foods with alkaline foods can improve your health. Proponents of this diet even claim that it helps fight serious diseases like cancer. This week's health topic examines the science, or lack of science, behind these claims.

What Is the Alkaline Diet?

The alkaline diet is also known as the acid-alkaline diet or the alkaline ash diet. Its premise is that your diet can alter the pH value – the measurement of acidity or alkalinity – of your body.

Proponents claim that metabolic processes in the body leave a “metabolic waste or ash” which can be alkaline, neutral, or acidic. They purport that acidic ash makes you more vulnerable to illness and disease, whereas alkaline ash is considered protective.

Supporters of the alkaline diet claim that food groups are considered acidic, alkaline, or neutral:

- Acidic: meat, poultry, fish, dairy, eggs, grains, alcohol
- Neutral: natural fats, starches, and sugars
- Alkaline: fruits, nuts, legumes, and vegetables



Elite Personal Training and Fitness Solutions does not provide medical treatment or intervention. We acknowledge scientific evidence that appropriately intensive exercise and sustainable nutritional intervention can have significant impact on chronic health disorders and obesity, dramatically improving symptoms when recommendations are followed. Please visit us at Eliteptf.com for more information and to schedule your evaluation.

Regular pH Levels in Your Body

When discussing the alkaline diet, it's necessary to understand pH. Put simply, pH is a measurement of how acidic or alkaline something is. The pH value ranges from zero – 14:

- acidic 0 – 6.9
- neutral 7
- alkaline 7.1 – 14.0



Proponents of this diet recommend that people monitor the pH of their urine to ensure that it is alkaline. However, pH varies greatly within the body. While some parts are acidic, others are alkaline – there is no set level. For example, your stomach is very acidic. This is necessary to break down food. The stomach has a pH of 2.0 – 3.5. In contrast, human blood is only slightly alkaline, with a pH of 7.36 – 7.44. When your blood pH falls under normal ranges, it can be fatal if left untreated.

Is it possible to change the pH of your body with food?

No, and even if you could, it wouldn't be healthy. In fact, alkalosis—when your body is too alkaline—is actually a condition that can cause nausea, vomiting, light-headedness, confusion, and muscle spasms.

What about alkaline water?

When it comes to chugging alkaline water, you're just wasting money. Alkaline water might be alkaline in the bottle, but it's not going to be alkaline once it hits your stomach.

Food Affects the pH of Urine but Not Blood

It is critical for your health that the pH of your blood remain constant. If the pH of your blood were to fall outside the normal range, your cells will stop working and you will die very quickly. For this reason, your body has many effective ways to closely regulate the blood's pH balance. In fact, it's nearly impossible for food to change the pH value of the blood of healthy people, although tiny fluctuations can occur within the normal ranges.

Food can change the pH value of your urine – though the effect is somewhat variable. For example, if you eat a large steak, your urine will be more acidic several hours later as your body removes the metabolic waste in your system. Therefore, urine pH is a very poor indicator of overall body pH and general health.

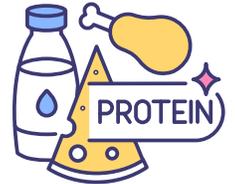


Tip of the week 9/19, page 2

Acid-Forming Foods and Osteoporosis

Many alkaline-diet proponents believe that to maintain a constant blood pH, your body takes alkaline minerals, such as calcium, from your bones to buffer the acid from the acid-forming food you eat. According to this theory, this will cause a loss in bone mineral density and lead to osteoporosis.

Research does not support the theory that acid-forming diets harm your bones. In fact, protein, which is an acidic nutrient, is very beneficial for the body.



Acidity and Cancer

Many people argue that cancer only grows in an acidic environment and can be treated or even cured with alkaline diet. While tumors grow faster in acidic environments, tumors create this acidity themselves. It is not the acidic environment that creates cancer cells. Rather, the cancer cells create the acidic environment. There is no link between acid-forming diet and cancer. Cancer cells also grow in alkaline environments.

The Bottom Line

One aspect of the alkaline diet is quite healthy. It encourages a high intake of fruits, vegetables, and healthy plant foods while restricting unhealthy junk foods. However, the notion that this diet boosts health because of its alkalizing effects is unfounded. These claims have not been proven by any reliable animal or human studies.

The alkaline diet is healthy because it's based on whole foods rather than unprocessed foods, not because it has anything to do with pH levels.



The healthiest way to approach your diet is to think about what nutritious foods you can add, not just what “forbidden” foods you must give up. Reach out to Elite for advice on safe, sound, scientific and sustainable eating.



Tip of the week 9/19, page 3