



HYDROCHLORIC ACID CHALLENGE PROCEDURE

ITS ACTION IN THE BODY

Hydrochloric acid (HCl) is normally secreted by the stomach to enhance the breakdown and subsequent absorption of the food and nutrients that we consume. HCl also serves a protective function, killing various pathogenic microorganisms that might otherwise cause infection in the gastrointestinal tract.

SYMPTOMS OF DECREASED HYDROCHLORIC ACID SECRETION

People with low HCl (hypochlorhydria) or absent HCl (achlorhydria) may be asymptomatic, or more commonly, may experience symptoms of impaired digestive function including gas, bloating and excessive fullness after meals.

HYDROCHLORIC ACID SUPPLEMENTATION

If hydrochloric acid secretion is believed to be low, HCl tablets can be taken. They are usually taken in the form of “Betaine HCl”. Hydrochloric acid supplementation is usually a very safe treatment when done under appropriate medical supervision.

PROCEDURE

1. On your start day, start with one tablet (usually 500-750mg) of hydrochloric acid, at the beginning of a regular, complex meal (Note: This means a full meal with a variety of macronutrients, not a snack.).
2. Monitor for any side effects such as a warming sensation, discomfort, gnawing pain or burning in the throat or stomach. If you experience any of these symptoms, drink a large glass of water, consider taking an antacid, if necessary, and report the findings to our office. If these side effect symptoms are **not** present, proceed to step 3.
3. Increase your dose by one tablet of hydrochloric acid at the beginning of each full meal (this would be two tablets for full meal #2, three for full meal #3 and four tablets for full meal #4). **If you note any of the above side effects, discontinue the HCL Challenge. Do NOT continue to increase the number of tablets. Report the findings.**
4. You have completed the challenge when you experience any of the side effects noted above or you reach 4 tablets with a meal and experience no symptoms.
5. Report the outcome of your HCL Challenge by listing the number of tablets per meal at which you experienced any symptoms and the dose of HCL per tablet. If you were up to 4 tablets per meal with no symptoms then report that finding.

