

How to Supplement with Betaine HCL for Low Stomach Acid

Steven Wright 591 Comments Updated: November 13, 2019 Heartburn



If [you've just learned](#) that you have low stomach acid and you don't fix it, you'll have subpar health forever... What should you do now? The first step is to replace the lost stomach acid until you figure out the root cause. **One of the most common methods of supplementing for low stomach acid is using Betaine Hydrochloride (HCL).**

Betaine HCL increases the level of hydrochloric acid in the stomach necessary for proper digestion and assimilation of nutrients from food. Normal levels of hydrochloric acid are required for complete digestion of

proteins and absorption of amino acids. It's also required for the extraction of vitamin B12 from our food. Betaine HCL helps to restore the proper acid levels in the stomach and maintain healthy GI function.

In case you didn't know, stomach acid is a key component of our immune system needed to kill off any potential pathogenic bugs in our food. If the acid levels aren't strong enough, besides not properly sterilizing our food, the stomach could delay emptying which can cause a multitude of digestive problems.

After switching my diet to SCD, I was still burping a lot after meals, having a decent amount of gas and feeling bloated all the time. Supplementing with Betaine HCL improved all of the digestive problems overnight. Coincidentally I lost 2 inches on my stomach measurement due to the reduced bloating... *imagine if everyone could save 2 inches with Betaine HCL, half of America would suddenly care about digestion.* □

Before Supplementing With Betaine HCL Read This

It's important to understand the risks of Betaine HCL supplementation. It's generally safe for most people. However, in the book "*Why Stomach Acid is Good For You*," Dr. Wright recommends doing so under the guidance of a physician. No, seriously... it's a good idea to find someone qualified to watch over your health and

decisions. Your health isn't a game, so get the right help.

People that are “high risk” shouldn't take Betaine HCL without supervision. You're high risk if you're consuming any anti-inflammatory medicines. Examples of those are: corticosteroids, aspirin, Indocin, ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) or other NSAIDs. These drugs can damage the GI lining and supplementing with HCL could aggravate it, increasing the risks of bleeding or ulcer.

Okay red tape and warnings aside – you can do this safely and it will help your health tremendously when you correct low stomach acid levels. Did you know your stomach wall is about 5mm thick? And did you know the stomach is built with ridges on the inside that act like a rock crusher as it pulverizes your food?

I tell you this because I want you to know that your stomach isn't some mamby pamby organ, it's a beast that can easily handle extreme acid levels. The amazing part is, if this acid got out of the stomach it could burn right through every other cell in the body. Our stomachs were built to create and contain acid and making short work of what we eat. **Supplementing with Betaine HCL will help it work like it was designed**, because every meal you eat with low acid it has to work harder than it should.

How to Figure Out Your Betaine HCL Dose

Each person will have a specific supplementary HCL dosage. Unfortunately, there isn't a special formula I can give you to figure it out. This is a case of trial and error until you get to the correct dosage. Failing to get to your correct dosage can remove the benefits of supplementing.

You must find the right dosage for you situation. If you fail to do the trial and error you're wasting your time and money.

This is a very common problem we see with our readers. Remember, the stomach is purposely built to handle extreme acid environments. If your correct dosage is 2400mg and you're only taking 1200mg, you're not really doing your stomach any favors. You must follow the process below to figure out the right dosage to get the maximum benefit.

1. Eat a meal that contains at least 15-20grams of protein (about 4-6ounces of meat).
2. Start by taking 1 pill (650mg or less) of Betaine HCL during the beginning of the meal.
3. Finish the meal as normal and observe your body for any changes in feeling associated with the stomach and

belly button area. Things to look for: heaviness, hotness, burning, or other GI distress.

4. Stay at this dosage of 1 pill for another day of meals with protein and if you don't notice anything on the 3rd day, try 2 pills.
5. Stay there for another day and then try 3 pills.
6. Keep increasing the number of pills taken with each meal until you notice some GI discomfort described in step #3.
7. **When this happens, you will know your ideal Betaine HCL dosage is 1 pill less.** For example, if you felt the discomfort going from 5 pills to 6 pills, then 5 pills is your proper dosage for a normal meal.

A Couple Points to Clarify:

- If you eat a snack or a meal without much protein, you won't need as much Betaine HCL (for a small snack like a piece of fruit you won't need any at all)
- When you experience the GI discomfort finding your correct dosage, you can mix ½ teaspoon of baking soda in 8oz of water and drink it to help lessen the pain.
- Dr. Wright notes in his book that *“paradoxically adverse symptoms are most likely to occur in individuals with the lowest levels of stomach acid. This is because these people are most likely to have atrophic gastritis (a*

thinned-out stomach lining), which makes them much more sensitive to even small quantities of HCL than a normal, thicker stomach lining.” This makes sense because a super inflamed stomach lining won’t have its normal protective barrier intact to contain the strong acids. In this case, it is wise to start with digestive bitters or get smaller dose Betaine HCL pills (think 350mg or less).

– If you have low stomach acid and you can’t supplement with Betaine HCL, there’s a few natural methods to help with symptoms. Start by taking a shot of lemon juice or vinegar before a meal to help the symptoms of indigestion. But know that these don’t actually help the digestion of food only the symptoms.

I Need to Take How Many Betaine HCL Pills?

It’s very common for people to stop short of their needed Betaine HCL dosage. In fact, in the beginning I was nervous about taking 6 pills at a meal. But trust me, there is nothing to worry about. **Dr. Wright reports that the common Betaine HCL dosage range in his clinical practice is 3,250-4,550mg per meal.** That means there are also plenty of people who need above 5,000mg for an effective dosage.

Remember, a normal functioning stomach is capable of producing and handling extreme acid ranges. If your

dosage starts getting extremely high without any GI distress (step #3), you must use your GI symptoms as a guide instead. These include burping, bloating, farting, and stool consistency. Keep everything else the same in your diet as you wait for these indicators to change for the better. Just because you can take 20 pills, doesn't mean you should. It could be that at 11 pills all of your problems disappear. For this group of people, try to find the minimum dose needed to help your GI symptoms and for Pete's sake go get more testing to figure out what is going on!