

## HYDROCHLORIC ACID

### 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 capsules 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 day one, start with one capsule (usually 8-10 grains) of hydrochloric acid, at the beginning of each meal (Note: This means a full meal, not a snack.).
2. Monitor for any side effects as a warming sensation, discomfort, pain or burning in the throat or stomach. If you experience any of these symptoms after just one capsule, stop and consult your physician. If these side effect symptoms are not present, proceed to step 3.
3. Increase your dose by one capsule (this would be two capsules or a total of 16-20 grains for day two) of hydrochloric acid at the beginning of each full meal. If you note any of the above side effects, decrease your dose to the level at which you had no side effects and maintain this dose. If these side effect symptoms are still not present, proceed to step 4.
4. Increase your dose as described in step 3. Each day increase the dose until you feel a warming sensation or until you reach a dose of seven capsules per meal. **Do not take more than seven (7) capsules with a meal.** Consult your physician if you reach this level without any side effect symptoms.

### PRECAUTIONS

**Hydrochloric acid should not be used at the same time as aspirin, phenylbutazone, ibuprofen, corticosteroid drugs or other anti-inflammatory medications. These medications can cause stomach bleeding and ulcers while hydrochloric acid can aggravate ulcers.**

### Resources

1. Gaby, AR and Wright, JV. Nutritional Therapy in Medical Practice. 2001. Seattle, WA: Nutritional Seminars.
2. Wright, JV and Gaby, AR. The Patient's Book of Natural Healing. 1999. Prima Health. Rocklin, CA. Pp. xii and 388.