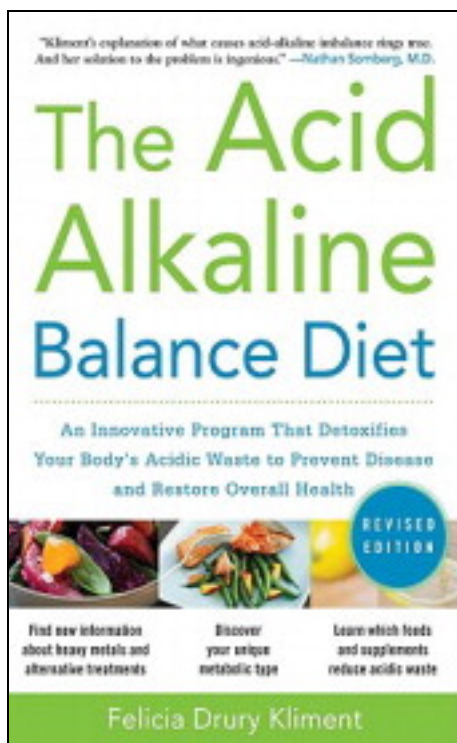


The Acid Alkaline Balance Diet

By Felicia Drury Kliment

Reviewed by Rosalind Michahelles



If you've heard that the acid/alkaline balance in your body might be important for your health and want to know why, this is a good book to read. The presentation is comprehensible, clear but not overly technical for the lay reader. Handy summaries of the author's recommendations for each ailment make this a useful reference book as well as an explanatory text.

So the reader afflicted with, say, allergies, Alzheimer's, arthritis, depression, diabetes, digestive problems, hypothyroidism, obesity, or thinning bones -- among quite a few others -- can see how a healthy pH balance can help.

Most of us remember pH when, in grade school science classes, we dipped litmus papers in lemon juice, tap water, Clorox, and so on, and they turned either pink or blue. The pH scale runs from 0 (most acid) to 14 (most alkaline), with 7 as the neutral mid-point. Human blood stays between 7.3 - 7.4, i.e., very slightly alkaline. Straying from that range can have dire consequences, so the body will buffer any such tendency. The modern Western diet being generally acidifying, buffering elements like calcium are "borrowed," from bone or other tissue, to bring the blood back into the healthy range. Osteoporosis, thus, can have a lot to do with diet.

In her introduction, the author points out that yin is acidic and yang alkalizing, thus making a bridge with Eastern medicine. And in that connection she further observes "Acid favors the decomposition of things, while alkaline (or base) prevents it." (p.x) Thinking of our own bodies, we can thus see that too much acid would indeed be a bad thing.

In the heart disease chapter the author explains how elevated cortisol levels

due to stress make the blood more acidic and how that can contribute to heart attack. She recommends hawthorn berry extract. "The berries' abundant food-digesting enzymes step up the speed at which food in the stomach is broken down, so there is little undigested food left to acidify. Hawthorn berries also contain an alkaline factor that binds with acidic particles and neutralizes them." (p.90)

In the chapter on lung disorders, we read that the asthmatic's breath is much more acidic than other people's. Normal exhalations are in the same range as the blood, but a severe asthmatic's can be as low as 5. Celery, dandelion leaf, and endive juice can help raise it and provide relief. Powdered greens, now widely available, are generally alkalizing and might prove helpful.

The raw or semi-raw potato caught my attention. "Raw potatoes not only improve digestion by reducing acidity but also heal stomach injuries – ulcers, lesions, and inflammation (gastritis) – by building up the protective mucous lining of the stomach." (p.46) She further asserts that raw potato is an appetite suppressant.

This is an interesting book but one that does not agree completely with others that you may have seen. Two that include charts showing which food has which effect in the body are ***The Acid Alkaline Diet for Optimum Health*** by C. Vasey (Healing Arts Press, 1999) and ***The Acid Alkaline Food Guide*** by Brown & Trivieri, (Square One, 2006).

I have compiled the following general guidelines:

Alkalizing food:

Sea salt
Molasses
Citrus fruit
Dried beans and peas, lentils
Leafy greens
Root vegetables
Bean sprouts
Green tea
Apple cider vinegar

Acidifying food:

Table salt
Sugar and sugary food
Aspartame, saccharin
Plums, dried fruit
Corn, wheat, other grains
Peanuts
Meat, fish, eggs
Cheese
Milk, soy milk
Black tea
Coffee
Vinegar (except apple cider)

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