

## Ayurveda - Health notes

### Acid Indigestion

Individuals with a pitta imbalance are susceptible to hyperacidity, peptic ulcers, and some types of inflammatory disorders. Stress, anger, impatience, extra-hot spicy foods, and environmental factors such as extreme heat can aggravate pitta. A few simple changes in lifestyle and diet can help bring pitta into balance for smoother, more effective digestion and greater calm and contentment.

Pitta is the heat energy within every cell but it is mainly located in the stomach area. Excess intake of heat producing foods can mean that the digestive tract overreacts with an increase in acid production. Pitta aggravating foods such as vinegar, tomatoes, sour citrus fruits, orange juice, salsa, yogurt (except lassi) onions, garlic, chili peppers, salty fried foods, and alcohol all aggravate the digestion when too much acid is present. These foods should be completely avoided until the acid level is brought into complete balance. And if there is a sensitivity to these foods they should be avoided in general.

It is important to not skip meals if you suffer from acid indigestion. Eating breakfast is especially crucial. Even if you are not especially hungry in the morning, it is important to at least take something light like stewed fruit, warm milk, or a date shake. Skipping breakfast has the effect of aggravating a subdosha of pitta called sadhaka pitta which governs the emotional heart. It is responsible for contentment and bliss. As lunch time approaches, with agni (the digestive fire) increasing and so also stomach acid, an empty stomach is not ideal from the ayurvedic viewpoint. It may result in irritability, anger, impatience and a feeling of being over hungry so that when lunch time comes you tend to overeat.

Try to avoid high-stress situations and practice stress management techniques. Enjoy natural beauty. The appreciation of natural beauty helps to balance sadhaka pitta and reduces stress. Favour cooling foods and drinks such as fresh coconut juice. Use an electric drill to make a hole in the coconut and use a straw to sip on the coconut juice. Use the fresh coconut meat in your vegetables, rice dishes, or chutneys. If you feel discomfort during the day, take a few sips of cool milk on an empty stomach.

Pomegranate juice also help balance the acid in the stomach. It tastes sour but it is actually both astringent and bitter, which help balance pitta.

Fresh aloe vera gel straight from the leaf is balancing. Avoid the store bought juice as citric acid is used as a preservative and it is too acidic if you suffer from acid indigestion.

Baked fennel seeds are also recommended to help settle the stomach and balance digestion. Eat 1/4 teaspoon of baked fennel seeds 3 times a day between meals.

Rose water or mint lassi is good to drink with a meal as they are cooling and sweet to taste. Favor astringent, bitter, and sweet tastes in your diet. Split mung dahl, green leafy vegetables, grains, watermelon, honeydew melon, lettuce, mangos, and spices such as fenugreek seeds, coriander, cardamom, and mint should be included in your daily diet.

The Herbal Aci-Balance formula from Maharishi Ayurveda helps balance stomach acid and digestion. It contains turpeth root, a special herb that both cleanses and balances the digestion. The Peace of Mind formula helps balance the mind, especially in stressful situations.