



## Bicarb Burb Test — Stomach Acidity.

The stomach acid test: *1 tsp bicarbonate of soda dissolved in approx. 200mls water and drunk on an empty stomach*<sup>1</sup>. There should be significant burping within 5-10 mins, in which case there is enough stomach acid. The gas is caused by the acid in your tummy acting to break up the molecule of bicarbonate which splits off the carbonate as a gas.

If you have low levels of stomach acid, **a short course (3-6 months) of HCl** or specific herbs, will stimulate cells in your tummy to begin secreting acid again. A nutritionist can advise and prescribe.

Secondary to this, if stomach acid is low, the food “bolus” going down to your intestine may be too alkaline to signal your pancreas or small intestine to secrete **enzymes** to digest your food adequately + result in discomfort or bloating, constipation and sometimes even undigested food particles in the stool. Another reason for low levels of enzymes being produced by the pancreas can be poor blood sugar balance/control caused by poor dietary choices, which overload the pancreas with work secreting insulin, not leaving it enough energy and resources to produce digestive enzymes! Again advice from a nutritionist, regarding diet choices, can be helpful.

**Bloating and constipation** can be a symptom of poor digestive function (digestive under function) caused by low levels of stomach acid, enzymes or bile (secreted by your gall bladder and needed particularly to digest fatty foods). However gas/bloating may also be a sign of an imbalance of your gut flora or microbiology. Imbalances in gut flora are identified by a stool test, which tests for levels of good or pro-biotic or bacteria against any unwanted or unhelpful organisms (usually yeasts like candida and/or bacteria) known as pathogens, parasites or infective agents etc. The latter often produce high amounts of gas/wind, which may be unpleasant smelling. Thirdly bloating can be due to low levels of certain B Vits and minerals. Imbalances in gut flora frequently accompany digestive under-function as an alkaline stomach environment, due to low levels of stomach acid, encourage bad bacteria and yeasts to grow.

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1. NB Anyone with a heart or cardiovascular complaint e.g. high blood pressure should NOT undertake this test.