

Dietary Self-Test: What Your Pee and Poop Say About Your Diet

Is your urine alkaline and how fast is your gut transit time?

The answer to these questions can give you some idea of how good a job you are doing in terms of dietary excellence. A good pretest before changing your diet.

Gut transit time is the time it takes after you eat something for it to be excreted. Having at least one bowel movement every day is good, but this alone does NOT tell you what your transit time is since every day, you could be excreting food you ate 4 days ago!

Beets are terrific for measuring transit time because they turn poop pink. To calculate your gut transit time, eat a large serving of beets and note the time. Count the hours until you see the beets make an appearance in the toilet and that is your transit time. (Ignore any pink colored pee – that is NOT what we want to measure.) Optimal transit time is 12-36 hours. (males are typically faster than females and plant eaters are faster than meat eaters.) Transit times over 48 hours are not healthy and suggest increased risk of cancer, or toxins being reabsorbed contributing to inflammation, pain and stiffness. We want our food to digest quickly and the waste to pass quickly suggesting a healthy gut microbiome, associated with a diet high in unprocessed whole plant foods with plenty of fiber.

Urinary pH (or Pee H) reflects the relative amounts of acid-forming and alkaline forming foods you are eating. Alkaline is optimal for health. A low urine pH suggests acidosis which over time contributes to loss of calcium from bones and muscle wasting. Our diet strongly influences the pH of our urine. If you are not alkaline, eat more fruits and vegetables and less acid forming foods. To test is simple. Boil 1 cup of chopped red cabbage in 2 cups of water until soft. Then pour through a strainer to remove the cabbage and collect the purple liquid. (You can eat the cabbage or add it to pot of soup.) Take the cabbage water into the bathroom with you and after you pee, pour it into the toilet and note the color. Any shift in color towards pink means you are not consuming enough vegetables (or are consuming too many acid forming foods. If it stays purple (no color change) you are still slightly acidic. Ideally you want is to see that purple color turning towards blue suggesting you are consuming sufficient alkaline foods to prevent acidosis and muscle wasting.