

Digestion initially begins in the mouth. As you start to chew your food, digestive enzymes found in saliva begin to break it down, preparing for nutrient absorption. It's important to chew your food thoroughly to achieve maximum absorption of all your vitamins and minerals.

### How to Chew Properly

To get into the habit of chewing foods thoroughly, try counting the chews in each bite, aiming for 30 to 50 times. Try putting your utensils down between bites to help you better concentrate on chewing.



- Chew every mouthful of food at least 30 times each, until the food becomes liquid.
- Chewing breaks down food and makes it easier on the stomach and small intestine.
- Saliva assists in the digestion of carbohydrates.

Saliva also makes the food more alkaline, which creates less gas<sup>1</sup>.

If under pressure at meals, take deep breaths, chew, and let the simple act of chewing relax you. Taking the time to chew will help you to enjoy the whole spectrum of tastes and aromas that make up the meal.

### Good Chewing Suggestions

#### Before eating

- Wash hands
- Shower or wash face to help relax.
- Turn off the television, radio, telephone.
- Do not read.
- Find a clean quiet place to eat.
- Light a candle or play soft music.
- Stretch, breathe.
- Align your posture and breathe.

#### During your meal

- Place a bite of food in your mouth.
- Put your utensil down.
- Place your hands together while chewing.
- Begin chewing and deep breathing.
- Concentrate on what you're doing.
- Look at your food or something attractive, or close your eyes partially or fully.

#### After eating

- Say thanks.
- Sit and talk after your meal.
- Take a light stroll.

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<sup>1</sup> "Livestrong." *Foods to Make your Body Alkaline*. N.p., 28 Mar 2011. Web. 19 Dec 2011.  
<<http://www.livestrong.com/article/282431-foods-to-make-your-body-alkaline/>>.