Prevent Gas with Your Diet

The body produces gas as a normal physical process. However, some individuals may experience discomfort or embarrassment because of “too much gas.” Complaints often take one of three forms: excessive belching, bloating or passage of gas. If you have trouble with “too much gas,” try these tips.

Eat less foods that give you intestinal gas

Foods that produce gas for one person may not produce gas for another person. Try to identify which foods are gas-forming for you. The following is a list of foods that are gas-forming for some people.

- **Legumes and certain vegetables**, such as:
  - Baked beans
  - Broccoli
  - Brussels sprouts
  - Cabbage
  - Cauliflower
  - Corn
  - Cucumbers
  - Dried beans
  - Dried peas
  - Kohlrabi
  - Leeks, scallions, shallots
  - Lentils
  - Lima beans
  - Onions
  - Peppers
  - Radishes
  - Rutabagas
  - Sauerkraut
  - Soy products
  - Turnips

- **Excessive amounts of certain fruits or fruit juices**, such as:
  - Apple juice
  - Apples
  - Avocado
  - Bananas
  - Cantaloupe
  - Grape juice
  - Honeydew melon
  - Pear juice
  - Prune juice
  - Prunes
  - Raisins

- **Milk and other dairy products if lactose intolerant.** These include:
  - Milks, including evaporated and condensed
  - Creams, including light, whipping and sour
  - Ice creams
  - Sherbets
  - Yogurts
  - Some cheeses, such as cottage cheese
  - Butters

Being lactose intolerant means you can’t digest lactose — the natural sugar found in milk and other dairy products. People who cannot digest lactose do not have enough of an enzyme called lactase. When people do not have enough lactase to digest lactose in the foods they eat or drink, they may have gas, stomach cramps, bloating, nausea or diarrhea.
If you are lactose intolerant, eat non-dairy sources of calcium (such as soy milk, kale or bok choy), use lactose-free milk or dairy products, or talk to your doctor or dietitian about taking a lactase supplement, such as Lactaid. Also, ask your doctor or dietitian if you are getting enough calcium in your diet. You may need to take calcium supplements to keep your bones healthy.

- **High fat foods**, such as:
  - Fatty meats
  - Fried foods
  - Rich pastries
  - Rich sauces and gravies

- **Bran or a drastic increase in fiber intake.**
  If you increase fiber in your diet, do it slowly. This can help limit discomfort. Be sure to drink plenty of water too.

- **Artificial sweeteners sorbitol and mannitol.**
  These sweeteners are found in many sugar-free candies and gum. They are also found in some medicines. Other artificial sweeteners such as aspartame and saccharin do not have this side effect.

### Reduce air swallowing

Swallowing air is the primary cause of belching and may contribute to bloating.

- Avoid frequent, repetitive swallowing, which may be caused by ill-fitting dentures, chewing gum or tobacco, sucking hard candy or frequent sipping of beverages.
- Avoid eating rapidly and gulping food and beverages.
- Avoid talking while eating or chewing.
- Eat and chew with your mouth closed.
- Avoid drawing on straws, narrow mouthed bottles, cigars, cigarettes and pipes.
- Avoid foods that contain air, such as carbonated beverages, beer and whipped foods.

### Try other measures to relieve or prevent gas

- Remain in an upright position after eating.
- Exercise regularly.
- Reduce stress.
- Eat meals slowly.
- Don’t wear tight fitting clothing.
- Lose weight if overweight.
- **Talk to your doctor** about taking over the counter medicines to reduce symptoms, such as:
  - Antacids with simethicone and activated charcoal, such as Gas X, Mylanta Gas, Phazyme and Charco Caps.
  - Beano, an over the counter digestive aid, contains the sugar-digesting enzyme that the body lacks to digest the sugar in beans and many vegetables.
  - Probiotic.