Tips to Decrease Gas

Everyone produces some gas, but some people suffer greatly due to excessive gas production. Trapped gas can cause stomachaches, cramping and bloating. A build-up of gas often causes a feeling of fullness, belching and flatulence (passing gas). Gas production may increase at times for no apparent reason. The natural balance of bacteria in your intestines may simply shift and you may experience more gas as a result.

To Decrease Gas:

1. Eat regularly and avoid large meals.

2. To reduce burping be careful to avoid swallowing air as you are:
   - talking or laughing
   - chewing gum or sucking on candy
   - drinking carbonated beverages
   - smoking
   - belching (self-induced belching can actually increase swallowed air)
   - eating rapidly

3. Relax while you are eating. Take time to chew foods thoroughly and to sip beverages slowly. Try to avoid washing food down with liquids.

4. Use a diary to record any symptoms your experience due to gas, including the foods and drinks you’ve consumed and any medications and/or nutritional supplements you’ve taken.

5. Try avoiding milk or dairy. You may have a lactose intolerance. This is caused by not making enough of an enzyme called lactase that helps break down lactose. Try a smaller portion of milk to see if symptoms improve. Most people with lactose intolerance can still tolerate cheese and yogurt.

6. Dietary fiber is a plant material that cannot be digested in the gastrointestinal tract. Rapidly increasing the amount of fiber in your diet can also increase gas formation, until your body can adjust to the greater volume of fiber. It is best to add more fiber to your diet slowly and expect to produce a little more gas, for a short period of time.

7. Some medications can increase gas production. Check with your pharmacist if you are curious about the affects of your medications.

8. High-potency vitamin/mineral supplements can also increase gas formation. Discuss your use of supplements (especially calcium supplements) with your registered dietitian.

9. Drinking carbonated beverages can increase your intake of carbon dioxide, which contributes to gas production. Consider drinking more plain water to help reduce your gassy symptoms.
10. Emotional stress can affect the gastrointestinal tract, thereby contributing to intestinal gas. Additional air can be swallowed as a result of stress, if you happen to sigh frequently or eat too fast. Try to relax before, during and after each of your meals.

11. Some people are just genetically predisposed to excessive gas production. One in every three people will produce gas, regardless of what they eat.

12. Wear loose, comfortable clothing when you are experiencing excess gas.

13. Try Beano™. Beano™ is a digestive enzyme that breaks down complex carbohydrates before they ferment in the colon.

14. Cooking with moist heat improves the digestibility of most vegetables. Soak dried beans before cooking. Drain, rinse well and cook the re-hydrated beans in fresh water to reduce excess gas production.

15. If you have more questions about your eating habits, especially in relation to your gassy symptoms, contact UW Health/Health and Nutrition for an appointment with a registered dietitian.

Possible Gas Formers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>apricots</th>
<th>cucumbers</th>
<th>pickles</th>
<th>beer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>apples, raw</td>
<td>dried beans/peas, cooked</td>
<td>popcorn</td>
<td>carbonated beverages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>avocado</td>
<td>garlic</td>
<td>prunes</td>
<td>chili</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>banana</td>
<td>nuts</td>
<td>radishes</td>
<td>coffee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bran</td>
<td>juices (excessive amounts)</td>
<td>raisins</td>
<td>Italian/Mexican foods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>broccoli</td>
<td>lettuce</td>
<td>rutabaga</td>
<td>spicy foods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brussel sprouts</td>
<td>lima beans</td>
<td>sauerkraut</td>
<td>spices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cabbage</td>
<td>melon</td>
<td>turnips</td>
<td>spiced luncheon meat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sorbitol</td>
<td>“sugar free” candy</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Experiment with foods to determine the affects they have on your gas symptoms. Don’t eliminate specific foods simply because they are on this list. By eating high-fiber foods more frequently, you will develop a greater tolerance to them and find you can enjoy high-fiber foods without difficulties.