

INTESTINAL GAS



After eating a meal or certain foods, many persons experience the common discomfort of “gas”. Gas is a normal by-product of digestion. The gastrointestinal tract normally holds about 3oz of gas, an amount that is silently and odorlessly absorbed into the bloodstream. Sometimes extra gas collects in the stomach or intestine, creating an embarrassing, but usually harmless situation.

Stomach gas- results from an uncomfortably large air bubble or two trapped in the abdomen. It occurs when you eat too fast, drink through a straw, or otherwise take in extra air while eating. It gets out when you belch. In some cultures, the escape of stomach gas after a meal is taken as a compliment to the chef; in America, it’s taken as just plain rude. However, there are a few tips to avoid this gastrointestinal faux-pas:

- Avoid sodas and other carbonated beverages
- Don’t gulp
- Chew with your mouth closed
- Don’t drink out of a can or through a straw
- Give up cigarettes, cigars, pipes, chewing gum, and lollipops
- Try not to catch a cold
- Don’t eat when you are nervous

An alternative approach is to learn how to not feel embarrassed so easily and simply belch. If burping doesn’t come easily, or bloating is severe and painful, a trip to the physician may be advised. *Simethicone* preparations or *Activated Charcoal* are also suggested for stubborn burps. They break-up gas bubbles and allow them to move to the colon for absorption or expulsion.

Intestinal gas- is embarrassing in any culture. It is formed in the colon, where bacteria attack non-digested items, causing them to decompose and produce gas. Carbohydrates release hydrogen carbon-dioxide and, in persons with certain types of bacteria in the gut, *methane*; odorless, but noisy gas. Proteins produce *hydrogen sulfide* and such volatile amines as *indole* and *skatole*, which add a distinctive odor.

Here is a step-by-step approach to avoid intestinal gas (that is, if one doesn’t work- add another to the antigas strategy):

- Cut down on simple carbohydrates
- Stay away from milk- lactose intolerance may be the real culprit
- Eliminate all known offenders
 - Beans, onions, cabbage, and wheat are among the most common

Once relief is achieved, you may gradually add more complex carbohydrates and high-fiber foods back into your diet.

If this method offers no relief, a medical examination may be necessary to rule or treat an overactive gastrointestinal tract or perhaps to indicate use of a *Simethicone* product.

Possible Gas forming Foods:

Vegetables:

- Beans: kidney, lima, navy, soy



- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- Cabbage
- Cauliflower



- Corn
- Cucumbers
- Kohlrabi
- Leeks
- Lentils



- Onions
- Peas: split or black-eyed
- Peppers (green)
- Pimentos



- Radishes
- Rutabagas
- Sauerkraut



- Scallions
- Turnips

Fruits:

- Apples: raw or juiced



- Avocados
- Cantaloupe



- Honeydew melon



- Watermelon

