

Digestive Disorders: Surprising Reasons Why You're Gassy

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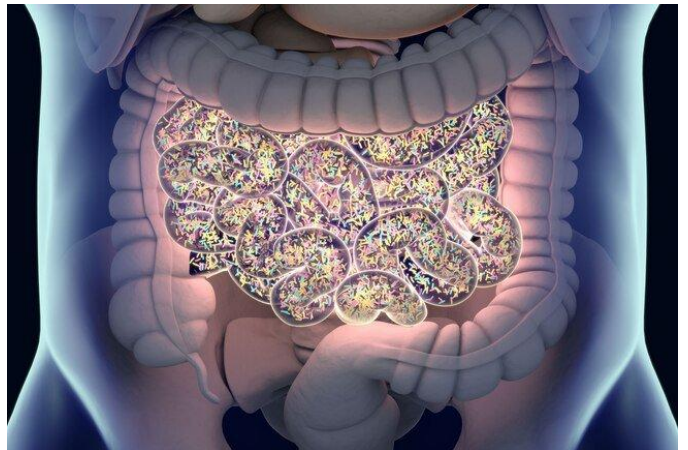
How Much Gas Is Too Much?

Gas is normal. It's part of your digestion, and everybody has it. Most people pass gas five to 15 times a day. But if you feel like you've got more gas than other people or more than you used to, you might want to find out what's causing it. This is especially important if your gas is causing you pain or other discomfort.



Why You Get It

Any gas you pass has to get into your intestines somehow. This can happen when you swallow air. Some gas is made in your intestines by bacteria and other microbes that live there. Those microbes help to break down the food you eat.



Swallowing Air

If you have more gas than you think you should, one reason could be that you're swallowing a lot of air. Some of that air might come out as burps. The rest will come out as farts.



Check Your Habits

Lots of things can make you swallow air. You might be swallowing air while you chew gum or suck on hard candy. Eating fast or drinking through straws also can lead to more swallowed air and more gas. If you have a habit of chewing on pens or other things, this might be another time that you are taking extra air into your belly that comes out as gas.



Skip the Fizz

The bubbles in carbonated drinks such as beer, soda, or sparkling water are a source of gas. If you like to drink those bubbly beverages, it could be a reason you're gassy. You could switch to a flat drink now and then to test out whether that's the cause of your gas.



While You Were Sleeping

Even if you aren't taking in extra air during the day, you might be doing it while you are asleep. If you tend to breathe or snore with your mouth open while sleeping, you may swallow lots of air overnight.

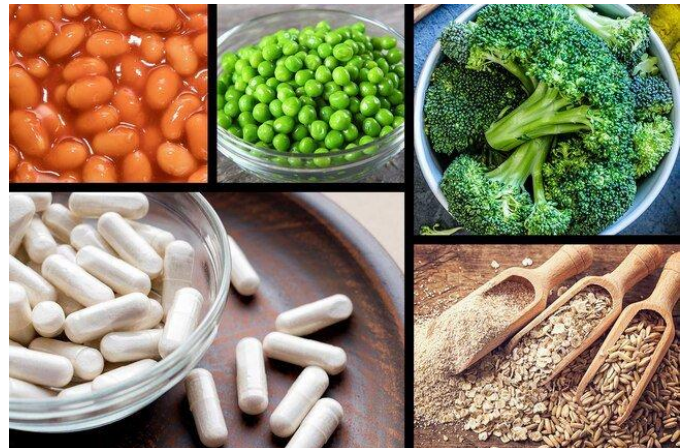


Consider Your Diet

Another reason you may be gassy has to do with the food you eat. Foods or supplements that are high in fiber are good for you, but they also can make you more gassy. These include:

- Beans
- Peas
- Vegetables, such as broccoli or leafy greens
- Whole grains
- Fiber supplements containing psyllium

Some research suggests that soaking beans in water for 12 hours can cut the gas-producing material they make.



Food Intolerance

You could be gassy if you're eating foods that your body doesn't absorb well. Sometimes this is called a food intolerance. Common ones include dairy products or proteins like gluten in wheat or other grains. If you think your gas is related to high-fiber foods or a food intolerance, keep track of what you eat to help you figure it out.



Artificial Sweeteners

Some sugar substitutes or artificial sweeteners could be making you gassy, too. These include:

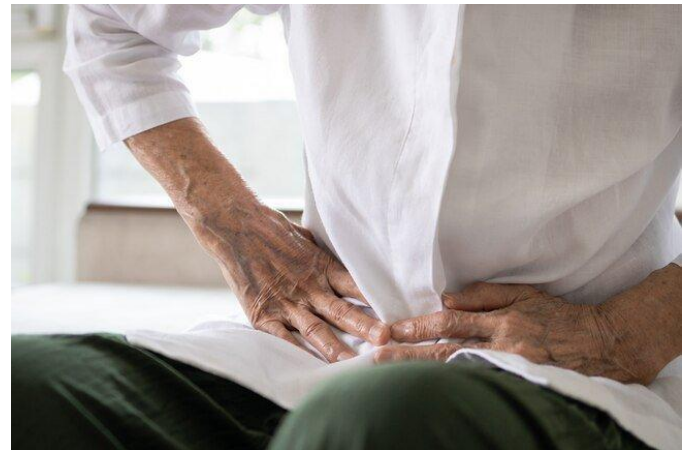
- Sorbitol
- Mannitol
- Xylitol

If you use these, pay attention to whether you feel more gassy afterward.



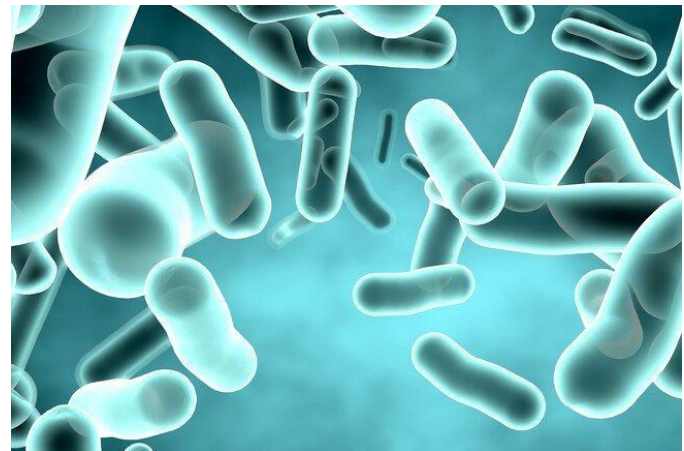
Constipation or Slow Digestion

If you're constipated and food is moving through your gut slowly, it gives more time for gas to build up. When food sits there longer, it gives microbes more time to work on it and make more gas. As you get older, your digestion might get slower, leading to more gas. Certain medicines can cause this, too.



Too Many Bacteria

If the bacteria or other microbes that live in your gut grow too much, you might get more gas. This doesn't always mean that you have an infection you need to treat. The bacteria might be healthy ones that help you break down food. But in some cases, antibiotics might help if this is the reason you're gassy.



Medical Conditions

Excess gas can be a symptom that comes with many disorders that affect the gut or intestines. These include:

- Diverticulitis
- Ulcerative colitis
- Crohn's disease
- Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)
- Diabetes
- Scleroderma
- Thyroid dysfunction
- Intestinal blockage

When to See a Doctor



Most of the time, gas can be embarrassing but nothing to worry about. But see a doctor if:

- Gas gets in the way of normal life.
- You're in pain.
- You feel lots of discomfort or bloating.
- You have lots of diarrhea or constipation.
- You throw up a lot or feel nauseated.
- You lose weight and don't know why.
- There's blood in your poop.
- You think you might need treatment.

Get medical help right away if you have severe belly or chest pain.

Sources:

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