

# Flatulence

Flatulence, known as farting or wind, is normal. There are things you can do if you fart a lot or it's smelly. In some cases it can be a sign of a health condition.

Check if your flatulence is normal

Farting is usually nothing to worry about. Everyone farts, some people more than others. The average is 5 to 15 times a day.

What's normal is different for everyone. If you notice a change or it's affecting your life, there are things you can do.

Excess gas in the digestive tract (esophagus, stomach, small intestine, and colon/large intestine) can come from two sources: 1) increased intake of gas, for example, from air swallowed; or 2) increased production of gas as certain undigested foods are broken down by harmless bacteria normally found in the colon. Undigested foods may also occur in chronic intestinal problems such as chronic megacolon, patients undergoing chemotherapy or in certain infectious diseases such as giardiasis. What foods cause excessive gas and/or cause gas pain?

If the body does not digest and absorb some carbohydrates (for example, the sugar, starches, and fiber found in many foods) in the small intestine because of a shortage or absence of certain enzymes there, this undigested food then passes from the small intestine into the large intestine,

where normal, harmless bacteria break down the food, producing hydrogen, carbon dioxide, and, in about a third of all people, methane. Eventually these gases exit through the rectum

Things you can do to cut down excessive or smelly wind.

## Do

eat smaller meals, more often

drink or chew food slowly

exercise to improve how your body digests food

eat a healthy, balanced diet

try to drink peppermint tea

## Don't

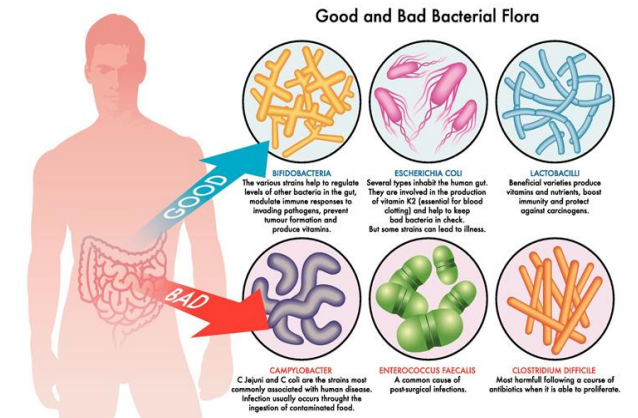
chew gum, smoke, or suck pen tops or hard sweets to avoid swallowing air

wear loose-fitting dentures

eat too many foods that are difficult to digest and make you fart

The following is a list of foods, drinks and other items that may be associated with chronic, constant, extreme, and/or increased flatulence and/or gas pains in certain individuals:

- Milk and other dairy products
- Beans



- Sodas
- Hard candy
- Lentils
- Wheat
- Potatoes
- Pasta
- Oat bran
- Apples
- Peaches
- Pears
- Bananas
- Apricots
- Melons
- Prunes
- Cabbage
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Brussel sprouts
- Corn
- Onions
- Shallots
- Chewing gum
- Raisins

## What foods reduce flatulence or gas?

Although there is little data to support contention that many foods can reduce gas, the following is a partial list of those foods that are listed by dietitians and others that are considered to reduce flatulence:

- Probiotics
- Yogurt
- Ginger
- Raw honey (not for infants and children under the age of one year)
- Peppermint
- Water
- Cinnamon
- Juices made from kale, spinach, cucumbers and other greens for example
- Pineapple
- Flaxseed
- Fennel

A pharmacist can help with excessive or smelly wind. Speak to a pharmacist about excessive or smelly wind.

They might be able to tell you:

- if you can buy something to help – for example, charcoal tablets or special underwear and pads that absorb smells
- if you should see a GP

### See a GP if:

- self help and pharmacy treatments haven't worked and flatulence is affecting your life
- you've got a stomach ache or bloating that won't go away or comes back
- you keep getting constipation or diarrhoea
- you've lost weight without trying
- there's blood in your poo
- you have signs of an infection, like a very high temperature or feeling hot and shivery

### Controlling the passing of wind

It is possible to improve your control in passing wind by practising pelvic floor muscle exercise with particular attention being made to the anal squeeze.

For more information: [NHS choices-Flatulence](#)

# Flatulence and tips on how to try and eliminate it.

