



**ST. MICHAEL'S  
HOSPITAL**  
Dún Laoghaire

# Pelvic Floor Centre **Gas**



## Excess Gas

Passing excessive gas (flatus) is common problem. Whilst passing gas is a normal part of digestion, the inability to control the passage of wind can itself represent a part of bowel incontinence.

There are simple changes in your lifestyle and diet that may help reduce or resolve the problem. It is important to remember that excessive gas has many causes so it is important to try all the different tips as each individual tip may not work for everyone.

## Food and Eating Habits

Certain foods and eating habits can contribute to passing excess flatus.

Keeping a food diary and eliminating one food at a time will help to identify if a certain food in your diet is the culprit. High fibre foods and particularly soluble fibre usually produce a lot of gas.

However fibre is important in the diet so careful manipulation of this in your diet is required to prevent constipation. It is also important to eat a nutritionally balanced diet.

Certain foods produce more gas than others. The table overleaf may assist with your food choices. Also it is worth bearing in mind that:

- Spicy food increases the speed food moves in your gut and as a result can produce more gas.
- Foods containing artificial sweeteners/ sugar free ingredients can produce flatus.
- Rich fatty foods also increase gas in some people.

Many people inadvertently swallow excess air when eating or talking quickly (aerophagia) resulting in excess flatulence. Chewing gum, smoking, wearing ill fitting dentures and not chewing food thoroughly can also contribute to this.

- Try to eat and drink slowly.
- Try not to talk when eating.
- Sit down to eat meals as opposed to eating on the go.
- Eat smaller portions more frequently.
- Eating at the same time each day may also be beneficial.

## Drinking

Like certain foods certain beverages can increase gas production.

Caffeine can increase bowel activity and increase gas. It is also a diuretic and draws fluid from your body.

Carbonated drinks and beer can increase belching and gas production.

Drinking fluids with meals can also increase your air intake and increase gas.

## Exercise

Regular exercise has many benefits including aiding the digestive process and improving bowel function.

Ensuring you are taking adequate exercise may help improve your symptoms of excess gas.

Abdominal massage may also help to relieve and reduce gas.

## Medications and Health conditions

Flatulence can be a side effect of certain medications and also a symptom of certain health conditions, such as indigestion, constipation and food intolerances.

A review of medications you are on (under medical supervision) may help your symptoms. Do not stop taking any prescribed medications until you have discussed this with your GP.

Your local pharmacist may be able to recommend certain medications and probiotics that may help reduce your symptoms.

There is also some limited evidence that drinking peppermint tea might help with excess flatus.

<b>Food that produces a normal amount of gas</b>	
<b>Meat / Poultry / Fish</b>	Meat, fowl, fish eggs
<b>Vegetables</b>	Lettuce, peppers, olives, avocado, asparagus, tomato, courgette, okra
<b>Carbohydrates</b>	White rice, chips, popcorn crackers
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	All nuts, jelly, ice lollies

<b>Food that produces a moderate amount of gas</b>	
<b>Vegetables</b>	Potatoes, aubergine
<b>Fruit</b>	Citrus fruits, apples
<b>Carbohydrates</b>	Pastries, bread

<b>Major gas producers</b>	
<b>Vegetables</b>	Onions, celery, carrots, brussels sprouts, cucumber, cabbage, cauliflower, radishes, beans, green salads, leeks, parsnips, peas
<b>Fruit</b>	Raisins, bananas, apricots, prunes, dried fruit
<b>Carbohydrates</b>	Bagels, pretzels, wheatgerm, bran cereal, brown rice
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	Legumes

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