



# How to combat bloating

By Gabi Heyes, for CNM (College of Naturopathic Medicine).

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**Is it our more sedentary lifestyles, what we eat, or the sheer amount of food we can consume, that makes bloating so common these days?**

Many people sport an extended abdomen as the day progresses, and those who experience terrible bloating can get to the point where they are barely eating any food, as the pain of 'trapped wind' can have them doubled-over. Since our bowels are not hot topics for conversation, how does one go about finding what's normal when it comes to wind?

Wind, gas or flatulence can get stuck in the bowel. For a decent 'escape route' for the wind, the bowels should ideally be opening after every main meal - that's three times a day! Many of my colonic clients are amazed by this fact, presuming that their 7am bowel movement meant they were 'regular'. In fact it is by no means enough, considering the weight of food consumed. Bowel movements can be increased with insoluble fibre, such as flax seeds or psyllium husks. Soak a tablespoon of seeds overnight in a glass of water so that they absorb the fluid, and then drink the whole lot in the morning upon waking.

If you manage to drink your recommended 8 glasses of water a day, try not to offset it with non-herbal tea, coffee or alcohol.

These all contribute to dehydration, and if you take a look at your tongue and see it looks wavy at the sides, like teeth marks, then you're already in a dehydrated state. Without enough water, your body cannot produce enough of the digestive enzymes that are poured onto food to break it down. An imbalance in these enzymes leads to food fermenting in your gut, with resulting gas. Stress will also lower digestive capacity, so try not to eat on the hoof or at your desk, but in a relaxed environment in a calm state of mind.

As a general rule, if you're waking up with a flat tummy that bloats as the day progresses, it is likely to be the food that you're eating. Consider a food sensitivity test (which is different to allergy testing). A naturopath may suggest an appropriately restricted diet, specific to your needs, and appropriate herbal or nutritional supplementation.

If you awake with wind, start eating your evening meal much earlier; do not eat protein with carbohydrate at the same time; and separate your meals into smaller, more frequent sittings.

## General guidelines:

- Do not eat within 3 hours of bedtime.
- Avoid the overuse of spices within a meal.
- Avoid fizzy drinks - the bubbles have to go somewhere!
- Try to drink 8-10 glasses of plain water throughout the day.
- A glass of water half an hour before meals provides fluid to create digestive enzymes.
- Chew food thoroughly before swallowing.
- Try separating protein from carbohydrate, i.e. no roasties or Yorkshire with your beef!
- Minimise sugar intake (biscuits, sweets, chocolate, syrups etc).
- Minimise processed foods such as deli meats, canned or jarred foods, crackers, breakfast cereals, pre-made meals, foods with added sweeteners and preservatives.
- Seek advice from a Naturopath or relevant Qualified Practitioner about using a probiotic (acidophilus), to restore friendly colon bacteria.
- Seek advice about using digestive enzymes and hydrochloric acid, to aid the break down of proteins, fats and carbohydrates. (Check for contra-indications).
- Consider whether colonic hydrotherapy may be appropriate.

The advice is not intended to diagnose or treat, and any health concerns or dietary changes should be first discussed with your GP.

**Wednesday 4th June from 6:30pm to 8:30pm**

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