

## **Intestinal Gas and Belching**

A certain amount of gas is normal. Belching is defined as the release of gas from the stomach via the mouth. Air swallowing is the most common cause for the belch. Flatulence is defined as the release of gas (flatus) from the anus. A change in dietary habits can help most people with too much gas. Some people can feel bloated or “gassy” and yet not actually have an excessive amount of gas – in this situation the problem may be trapping of gas by spastic areas of the intestine or sensitivity by the gastrointestinal tract to normal distention with gas (often a key symptom of irritable bowel syndrome). There is no single medicine that treats all kinds of gas problems.

Although a change in dietary habits can help most people with too much gas, excessive gas can be a symptom of a specific disease that needs specific diagnosis and treatment.

The following instructions are designed to reduce “air swallowing” and thereby reduce belching, flatulence, abdominal distention, and abdominal discomfort:

1. Do not chew gum (this leads to excessive swallowing of saliva and air). Gum may also contain sorbitol and fructose these are sugars produce gas.
2. Do not suck on lifesavers, hard candies, or other objects such as toothpicks.
3. Do not drink carbonated drinks or use a straw for any beverage.
4. Do not drink excessively hot drinks. Sipping can cause air swallowing.
5. Try to eat each meal in leisure. Eat slowly. Do not gulp food.
6. Do not gulp after belching. After belching, close mouth and breathe in slowly through the nose.
7. Check for dental problems and ill-fitting dentures.
8. Check for nasal congestion. Snoring and sleep apnea syndrome can contribute to air swallowing.

The following are considered gas products foods:

Moderate: Pastries and bread; apples; broccoli; cauliflower; eggplant and potatoes.

Extreme: Milk and dairy products: mainly if lactose intolerant. Pretzels and bagels: wheat products can be a problem with either wheat allergy or intolerance. Beans; brussels sprouts; cabbage; carrots; onion; sauerkraut; turnips; apricots; bananas; prunes; raisins and fruit juices.

### **“Elimination Diet”**

The following is one extreme way to determine food sensitivity:

For severe cases of gas and diarrhea where other diseases have been excluded, intolerance to food and beverages may be detected by this diet. Start with this very restricted diet and add one drink or food item each day. For seasonings, salt and sugar are permissible. A fiber supplement such as Fibercon, Hydrocil and Metamucil should be added early on to keep the bowels regular.

- Breakfast: water and hot rice cereal.
- Lunch & Dinner: water, chicken, turkey, fish, lamb, fish (all broiled or baked) and rice.  
Snacks: Rice cakes

Add the following generally well-tolerated foods daily: asparagus; avocado; cucumbers (without seeds); okra; olives; spinach; tomato zucchini; cantaloupe; grapes; nuts; eggs; Jell-O and sherbet. Add the following generally well-tolerated beverages: tea and cranberry juice.

Another option is to be tested for reactions to food by a blood test – the LEAP mediator reactor test.

## **Belching and Gas**

To reduce belching, be careful to reduce air swallowing:

- Do not drink with a straw.
- Do not drink soda or beer.
- Do not sip hot beverages.
- Do not talk while eating.
- Do not gulp after belching. After belching, close the mouth and breathe in slowly through the nose.