



Flatulence (Gas)

Flatulence is passing gas through the anus. For the average adult, this happens about 6 to 20 times a day.

Signs & Symptoms

- Pressure or discomfort in the lower abdomen or anal area.
- Passing gas. A foul odor occurs sometimes.

Causes

Gas is caused by swallowing air and digesting foods. Eating high fiber foods like beans, peas, and whole-grains create more gas than other foods. Dairy foods can create large amounts of gas in some people.

Gas may signal other problems, too. These include lactose intolerance, taking certain antibiotics, and abnormal muscle movement in the colon.

Gas can also be a symptom of **celiac disease**. With this, the lining of the small intestine is damaged from eating **gluten**. This is a protein in wheat, barley, and rye. Other symptoms of celiac disease are pain and bloating in the abdomen; diarrhea; weight loss; anemia; and a certain skin rash. Treatment is a gluten-free diet. Find out about celiac disease from www.celiac.nih.gov.

Treatment

Self-care treats most cases of gas. If the gas is due to another problem, treating the problem reduces or gets rid of the gas.

Questions to Ask

With gas, do you have a steady pain in the upper abdomen with nausea and vomiting? Or, do the whites of your eyes or your skin look yellow?



NO

Do you get a lot of gas only after taking a prescribed antibiotic?



NO



Self-Care / Prevention

- Try not to swallow air. Don't have carbonated drinks and chewing gum. These can cause more air to get into your stomach.
- When you add fiber to your diet, do so gradually.
- When you pass gas, note which foods you have eaten. Eat less of the foods that often cause gas. Common ones are apples, bran, whole-wheat foods, cabbage-family vegetables, eggs, dairy products, prunes, and beans.
- To prevent getting gas from many "gassy" foods, try an over-the-counter product, such as Beano. This helps prevent gas from beans, bran, nuts, onions, soy, and many vegetables.
- Try an over-the-counter medicine with simethicone, such as Gas-X.
- Release the gas when you need to. Go to another room if it will help you be less embarrassed.