

Bloating a major issue: Ways to reduce and coping strategies.

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Introduction

There are currently no drugs or medical management solutions that are primarily for the treatment of bloating. Gas and bloating are common side effects of the digestive system, and gas production is a natural component of the process. However, if you've found that your lifestyle is contributing to frequent gas and bloating, here are some lifestyle modifications to consider.

Regulate your meal times

Waiting until you're hungry to eat will almost always result in a rushed dinner, with the large bits and minimal chewing noted previously. An irregular meal pattern was linked to more severe GI symptoms in an observational study of IBS patients [1]. Subjects' symptoms improved when they formed a more consistent mealtime pattern, but they also made other modifications, such as cutting back on sweets and increasing their intake of fruits and vegetables. Although it's unclear whether the regular meal pattern alone improved their symptoms, these data suggest that it's a realistic and low-risk behaviour change.

Get some light exercise

Regular exercise, maybe due to its impact on stomach motility, can help to alleviate some of the symptoms of IBS and chronic constipation. A single session of mild physical activity on an exercise bike expedited the flow of gas through the intestines in a small trial of healthy individuals, which may minimise the sensation of bloating or distension [2]. On the other hand, intense endurance exercise can produce GI distress in certain persons [3]. So, if you're looking for some respite, go for a light bike ride or a brisk stroll.

Eat fibre and drink water

Fibre is necessary for the formation of comfortable bowel motions, and in some situations, a lack of fibre may be contributing to your bloating. More fibre might assist if that's the case, but additional context is required here. Not all fibres are created equal, and adding additional fibre isn't necessarily beneficial.

Insoluble fibres, such as celery strings or hardy apple skins, add weight to the stool and hasten its passage through the digestive tract. Soluble fibres, such as those found in beans

and oats, absorb liquid and impede stool movement. Because many soluble fibres are fermentable, they can result in the formation of gas. Insoluble fibres are less likely to contribute to gas because they aren't easily fermented [3].

Women should consume 25 grams of fibre per day, while men should consume 38 grams per day, according to current recommendations in the United States. If you aren't meeting these requirements and wish to increase your fibre intake, start carefully to avoid GI upset. One cup of cooked broccoli, for example, can add two grams to your daily intake, whereas a medium-sized orange can add three grams.

Although there is no formally determined tolerable upper limit for fibre, there is a subjective, comfortable limit that exists on an individual basis. Increasing your fibre intake may not be the best solution if you're already beyond the suggested quantities.

Because your level of hydration affects the efficacy of fibre, you may want to focus on your water intake instead. Constipation and bloating are more likely to occur if you are dehydrated even slightly [4,5].

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