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Endoscopy

Gastrointestinal Medicine

Nutrition



The Centre for GI Health

FLATUS (GAS)

Excess production of intestinal gas usually results from the further breakdown of fermentation of foods by normal bacteria residing inside the intestine.

The predominant gases formed include hydrogen and methane.

Normally, about 600 ml of gas is passed from the rectum per day. At any time, the intestine normally contains about 200 ml of gas.

Some foods we eat are particularly prone to gas production and may need to be avoided or restricted where gas production is excessive (see list).

Occasionally, excess gas production is due to unrecognised gluten intolerance (coeliac disease). Please see your doctor if you think this is possible. More commonly, unrecognised lactose (dairy) or fructose intolerance is to hand and their withdrawal from the diet may be very helpful. These foods are generally referred to as FODMAPs, which stands for Fermentable Oligosaccharides, Disaccharides, Monosaccharides and Polyols.

A special test called hydrogen breath test allows a more specific examination of which FODMAP may be causing digestive problems.

Medicines can help reduce excessive gas formation, including activated charcotabs, simethicone ("De-Gas"), or combination treatment ("NoGas").

Some people who become bloated or feel they have more gas than usual, are just more sensitive to gas distension of the intestine than normal. In such cases antispasmodic drugs may be helpful (eg: Buscopan). Regular exercise may be beneficial in helping the passage of gas through the digestive tract.

Food that may induce excessive gas production

- Beans
- Onions
- Carrots
- Diet Drinks
- Chewing Gum
- Celery
- Garlic
- Figs
- Muesli
- Leafy Vegetables
- Bran
- Fruit Juices
- Raisins
- Dates
- Candies
- Nuts
- Mints/Chocolates (containing sorbitol)

