



Which Foods Really Cause Flatulence?

Posted By [Dr. Mercola](#) | January 24 2008

Certain foods are common causes of flatulence, and temporarily avoiding these foods can help you determine if they're a problem for you. According to the Mayo Clinic Health Letter, the following foods are likely to cause gassiness:

- Dairy products, which contain sugar lactose that causes gas
- Vegetables, including onions, radishes, cabbage, celery, carrots, brussel sprouts, broccoli, cauliflower and legumes
- Fruit sugar, which is especially high in prunes, raisins, bananas, apples, apricots and fruit juices from prunes, grapes and apples
- Fiber
- Fatty foods and carbonated drinks

Additionally, artificial sweeteners such as sorbitol, mannitol and xylitol may also cause flatulence.

Food manufacturers have begun to develop products that promise to not cause flatulence. For instance, in 2006 a flatulence-free manteca bean was grown in the UK.

Dr. Mercola's Comments:

Flatulence occurs when a food you eat does not get digested as well as it should in your stomach and small intestine. When this largely undigested food reaches your large intestine, bacteria will begin to break it down, or in other words it will start to ferment.

The product of this fermentation process is a mixture of gasses including:

- Carbon dioxide
- Methane
- Hydrogen
- Hydrogen sulfite (which is what typically causes the odor)

If you are experiencing a lot of flatulence (about 10 to 18 passages a day is considered "normal" according to the American College of Gastroenterology), this is a giant clue that something is wrong.

Either you are eating foods that are not right for your [nutritional type](#) or you may be suffering from a digestive disorder -- such as [irritable bowel syndrome](#) or [celiac disease](#) -- or food allergies.

One food allergy, lactose intolerance, explains why some people get flatulence from dairy products. People with lactose intolerance lack an intestinal enzyme to break down lactose, so it passes undigested into your large intestines, where it produces gas.

Aside from your digestive enzymes, the amount of bacteria in your gut, along with the ratio of good to bad bacteria, is also an important part of your digestive health. If you don't have enough good bacteria, your body will not only have problems with digestion, it will be vulnerable to disease.

Because the nutritional origin of many diseases you face is connected to a lack of balance in your intestinal bacteria, one of the first suggestions new patients at [The Optimal Wellness Center](#) hear is to start taking a high-quality probiotic (good bacteria).

What to do if You Have Frequent Flatulence

Remember, flatulence can be a major warning sign that something is out of balance in your body, and it would likely serve you well to examine some of the causes. You can start by first eliminating the foods you suspect are causing you gas, because until you clear up the underlying issue, they could be harming your body.

If you're not sure which foods are problematic for you, the best way to [find out if you have a food sensitivity](#) is to keep a food diary. By keeping careful and detailed records, it is possible to sort many allergies out without having to undergo expensive testing.

Remember to watch out for hidden ingredients common in processed foods, such as soy, wheat, gluten, peanuts, and pasteurized milk, all of which are common allergenic foods.

Next, you can try:

- Eating more [fermented foods](#). These are rich in both good bacteria and enzymes. I personally eat natto, which are healthy fermented soybeans, frequently, but you can also try raw kefir or cultured veggies. This is probably one of the most important first steps.
- Taking a high-quality probiotic.
- Exercising, to help keep food moving through your system.
- Using [spices](#) that may help to prevent flatulence. These include turmeric, coriander, peppermint, fennel, sage, chamomile and ginger.

Finally, when you reintroduce a food that was previously a gas-causing food, be sure you do so slowly. This will give your body a chance to adapt to the adjustment.

And remember to always listen to your body. If the food still continues to cause you trouble, pay attention to your body's feedback and eliminate it once again.

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