

## Bloating and Gas

Bloating and gas are rarely discussed side effects of some types of weight-loss surgery that affect people to different degrees. Gas and bloating can occur from swallowing air, which can create a feeling of pain in the pouch, or they can occur when the body does not break down certain types of carbohydrate in the intestines. What your body doesn't digest, gut bacteria will. The by-product is gas.

The reasons why gas and bloating are more common after certain types of weight-loss surgery (especially gastric bypass [GBP]) are not fully understood. However, it has been theorized that less of the food you eat is broken down and absorbed after these surgeries, leaving more for your gut bacteria. Another theory is that the normal bacterial state of your gut is changed after surgery.

Certain foods and ways of eating and drinking tend to cause more gas, so changing your diet and eating behaviors may help. Try the following tips:

- **Avoid sugar alcohols and fructose.** Sugar alcohols include sorbitol, maltitol, xylitol, and other ingredients ending in “ol.” These are altered sugars that are used in some sugar-free products, including some protein bars. They are used because they have a delayed impact on blood glucose (sugar) for those with altered glucose metabolism. However, they are metabolized by gut bacteria and can cause gas. They also can cause diarrhea. Foods high in fructose (such as large amounts of fruits) can also cause gas.
- **Determine whether you are lactose intolerant.** Lactose is a sugar naturally found in milk and in other dairy products to a lesser degree. It may be present in protein supplements and can be used as an additive in processed foods. Symptoms of lactose intolerance include gas and bloating. If you are lactose intolerant, switch to lactose-free milk, try a lactose enzyme, or choose soy, almond, rice, or coconut milk.
- **Use probiotics.** They help to maintain the healthy bacteria and natural digestive process in your intestinal tract. Talk to your healthcare professional about Probiotics that are available to you.

- **Avoid swallowing too much air.** People can swallow air by:
  - Drinking from a straw or bottle
  - Chewing gum or sucking on sugar-free mints or candies
  - Drinking carbonated beverages, such as soda or sparkling water
  - Gulping
  - Eating or drinking too fast
  - Eating quickly, gulping food or beverages
  - Swallowing excessively
- **Limit fat.** Fat is not well absorbed after a duodenal switch procedure and should be limited.
- **Use products that reduce or treat gas-related symptoms.** Examples include:
  - Beano, a natural enzyme that can reduce the gas that occurs after eating gas-producing foods, such as cabbage, beans, and foods that cause you to bloat and get gassy. The recommended dose is 1 tablet per ½ cup of gassy food. Take it with your first bite.
  - Simethicone products, such as Gas-X strips.
  - Devrom, an internal deodorant used to reduce the unpleasant odor of flatus.
- **Limit soluble fiber.** Soluble fiber is fermented by bacteria in the gut. Types of soluble fiber include oats and oat bran, soluble fiber supplements, barley, and beans and dried peas. These types of fiber can lower cholesterol levels and provide other beneficial health effects. However, if gas is problematic and unresolved by other means, limiting soluble fiber may be an option to explore.
- **Avoid foods that may cause gas.** Examples include:
  - Vegetables: Beets, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, corn, cucumbers, greens (e.g., kale, turnip or beet greens), green peppers, leeks, lettuce, mushrooms, onions, parsley, and tomatoes
  - High-fiber cereals and grains (increase consumption gradually)
  - Beans (e.g., pinto beans, black beans, black-eyed peas, kidney beans, garbanzo beans, lima beans, fava beans, lentils, soybeans)
  - Peanuts and peanut butter
  - Soy milk
  - Soy protein isolate (an ingredient in protein bars and other high-protein supplements)