

## Why Do You Fart?

Everybody farts, and that is okay. Feel free to deny or walk away fast, but passing gas up to 20 times a day is completely normal. When your fart count goes higher, however, it could mean something else.

You always order the side of broccoli or eat a lot of beans, cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, among many. All these foods contain fibre, which keeps your digestive system moving, helps regulate blood sugar and cholesterol levels, and keeps your weight in check. The less-than-ideal, somewhat-embarrassing, but can't-help-it side effect: farts. That is because your stomach and small intestine can't absorb some of the carbohydrates — sugars, starches and fibre — in foods we eat. 

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 When indigestible sugars like raffinose reach the colon, the bacteria that inhabit that part of our digestive tract feed on them and produce gas as a by-product.

It doesn't matter if you are eating broccoli or a bowl of blueberries — the eating part is the problem. 

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 The faster you do it, the more air you swallow. Burping typically gets the air out of your belly, but any that remains finds its way into your lower digestive tract and well, comes out the other side. You may also swallow extra air when you chew gum or drink through a straw.

Think of your digestive tract as one long muscular tube. 

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 Normally, the small intestine makes strong contractions to sweep food into the colon. But sometimes medications, infections, certain diseases and conditions such as diabetes or neuromuscular conditions, or complications from surgeries, can interfere with this 'clearance wave', allowing bacteria to get a foothold in the small intestine and overgrow. Thus, they are able to produce extra gas. This somehow reveals your unbalanced gut health.

Drinking milk gives you farts. 

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 Blame a little enzyme called lactase. It is made in the small intestine and responsible for breaking down lactose, a sugar found in milk, into simpler forms the body can absorb. Low levels of lactase mean lactose gets into the colon undigested, where bacteria breaks it down and your gas issues begin. Lactose intolerance is super common and it is another reason for excess gas. Even if you have never had trouble eating dairy before, chances are you will probably get it as you age because your lactase production drops off sharply.

No one can digest this protein found in wheat, barley and rye, but if you have coeliac disease, eating gluten actually triggers an immune response in your small intestine. The reaction can cause a breakdown in the lining of the intestine, affecting its ability to absorb nutrients; and the damage can cause excess farts, diarrhoea and even weight loss. 

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 Researchers estimate that only 20 percent of people with coeliac disease may receive a diagnosis. If you suspect a sensitivity to gluten or coeliac disease, talk to your doctor.

If you are feeling anxious before your big meeting at work, the butterflies in your stomach may actually be gas. Scientists have recently found a connection between mental health and gas production. One study presented at UEG Week Virtual 2021, a European gastroenterology conference, found that extreme burping and farting are associated with stress, anxiety and depression symptoms. 

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 Your tensed-up muscles include the stomach muscles, may slow down your digestion. Not processing your food efficiently makes it pass more slowly, resulting in a gassy stomach. Additionally, stress makes it harder to swallow food and may increase the amount of air in each swallow. The outcome is an increase in burps and farts.

Farting is unavoidable, and you should not entirely cut out gas-producing foods like broccoli and beans. You are going to fart, and that is okay. Even if you find it embarrassing, it is good to remember that farting is as natural as breathing.

as breathing.

- A** You swallow air every time you eat or drink.
- B** Studies have shown that people perceive that they are passing a lot of gas.
- C** So does eating yoghurt, cheese, and all else dairy.
- D** Notorious gas producers, like broccoli and beans, are high in a kind of carb called raffinose.
- E** People without coeliac disease don't have these same changes to the small intestine, but they may get gas and bloating in reaction to the gluten they can't break down.
- F** Stress and anxiety tense up your muscles in response to an impending threat.
- G** Food goes in the top and the muscle contracts to push it along out the bottom.
- H** As you age, you are more likely to develop health problems that predispose you to produce more gas.

[6 marks]



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