

SPRING/SUMMER EDITION 2003

Gas

“Gas Buster” or the True Fact about “flatulence.....

For most people gas is a problem because it can cause painful bloating and mortifying odors. Everyone has gas. Most gas is odorless. Gas is composed of hydrogen, nitrogen and carbon dioxide and some oxygen. 1/3 of the adult population produces copious quantities of methane, while the rest little or none. Several sulfur containing compounds are responsible for most fecal odors. Certain foods are gassier than others. Gas producing foods for one person may not be for the next. Carbohydrates are largely to blame, sue to sugars, starches, and fiber that reach the colon (large bowel) without being digested or absorbed. Once in the colon, the colonies harmless bacteria eat them and give off by-products of hydrogen, carbon dioxide, and in some people methane. These are the “ good bugs” (bacteria) that are wiped out with antibiotics and need to be replaced by taking *Ultradophilus*, *Lactobacillus acidophilus* or *ultrabifidus*. The most common sources of gas are:

1. Lactose, a sugar that occurs in cow’s milk and cow’s milk products. If you take milk without food, you’re more likely to get gas, because food slows the absorption of milk down. Without food the lactose quickly arrives in the large intestines uncharged and can overwhelm the system, too much or too quickly. Yogurt is low in lactose (its friendly bacteria digest the milk sugar), but some brands contain “undigested lactose” Lactaid enzymes (over the counter OTC can help)
2. Beans, vegetables, and grains cause some gas because some of their sugars are indigestible, and our bacteria have a feast. But somehow entire cultures have subsisted on beans and rice for centuries. Beano an OTC enzymes can help digest bean sugars.
3. Soluble fiber, like the pectin in fruits and the beta-glucans in oat bran. Gas producing bacteria feed off small amounts of starch that escape digestion by enzymes in the small intestine.
4. Swallowed air. Sometimes people worry about gas, and the more they worry the more air they swallow and the more gas they pass. If people can just get their brain off their gut, say with an exercise program, they will feel better(keeps thing moving!).

Remedies???? Daily *Lactobacillus* (*Primal Defense Ultra*, *VS3*, *Culturelle*), *Beano*, *Lactaid* occasional *Pepto-Bismol*, exercise, odor busters (*Devrom*, *Nulo*), and **avoiding foods that can cause YOU gas**. Remember sugar alcohols like sorbitol, mannitol, and xylitol in “sugar-free” foods can produce gas. Matches, incense and sprays can help “clear the air”. Anyone experiencing persistent diarrhea despite dietary modification should have a stool studies done by their PCP. You may need antibiotics to help restore natural or “good” bacteria flora. Reference: Nutrition Action Health Newsletter, May 2003.
