



how can I ease stomach gas?

This Thanksgiving, settle a troubled tummy with herbs and supplements.

Photograph by BONNIE HOLLAND

Gastroenterologist

I suggest you **keep a daily food journal** to help pinpoint exactly which foods and situations are causing your gas. If you're reacting to beans, taking Beano before a meal could help calm your stomach; if dairy is the problem, Lactaid may provide relief. You can also **take an over-the-counter drug like Gas-X or Phazyme**, which will break up gas pockets. If you still feel discomfort after using these medications, you could have a wheat allergy or other type of food sensitivity. In this case, your physician may put you on an elimination diet to cut out your trigger foods. Be sure to tell your doctor if you're experiencing weight loss, diarrhea, back pain, abdominal cramps, vomiting, or rectal bleeding—these could be symptoms of a more serious condition such as acute colitis, a chronic colon infection.

—*Sharon Molinas, M.D., member of Gastrointestinal Associates of Rockland, a gastroenterology practice in New York*

Nutritionist

Because the underlying cause of gas is a lack of digestive enzymes in the stomach and intestines, I tell my patients to **take a papaya supplement** containing papain, an enzyme that helps break down food. Follow the instructions on the bottle—the usual dosage is one or two pills with meals. In addition, daily probiotic capsules, like those made by Culturelle or Metagenics, promote the growth of healthy bacteria that assist with digestion. **Steer clear of asparagus, fried foods, cruciferous vegetables (like Brussels sprouts, cabbage, and cauliflower), and the sweetener sorbitol**—these are all known gas producers. And avoid chewing gum, which causes you to swallow more air than you normally would. If you do get gassy, sip fennel, chamomile, or peppermint teas, which can be found at most health food stores.

—*Marissa Lippert, M.S., R.D., founder of Nourish, a nutrition and lifestyle counseling center in New York City*

Chinese Herbalist

One way to prevent gas is to avoid eating fruit when you're eating vegetables or protein. Because your body processes these foods at different speeds, combining them can weaken your digestive qi and lead to gas. If you already have gas, **chew a Hingoli tablet** after a meal—it's an Ayurvedic formula that contains asafetida, an herb that reduces flatulence. The homeopathic remedy Carbo veg 30C can also help by absorbing intestinal gas bubbles. Take it with water 20 minutes after a big meal, following the dosage on the package. And to replenish your supply of digestive flora, **eat a cup of yogurt mixed with ¼ teaspoon of powdered turmeric** (an anti-inflammatory) in the morning on an empty stomach. I recommend goat's-milk yogurt—it doesn't contain casein, a protein in cow's milk that causes allergies in many people.

—*Letha Hadady, D.Ac., author of Feed Your Tiger (Rodale, 2007) and the blog asianhealthsecrets.com*