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Beat the bloat 3 ways

Health specialists tell BROOKE EVANS-BUTLER what we should do

There are many causes of bloating, so not all treatments will be suited to everyone.

Today, we look at some techniques for easing bloating — from a physio, naturopath and dietitian — that you can discuss with your health practitioner.

FROM THE NATUROPATH

Naturopath Melissa Hohaia says one of her top remedies for bloating is to take approximately one tablespoon of cloudy, apple cider vinegar or lemon juice in warm water 15-30 minutes before a meal.

“This can help to increase the production of digestive enzymes and therefore food will be more efficiently broken down and there will be less chance for the bacteria to cause gas through fermentation,” she explains, adding that apple cider vinegar needs to be the ‘cloudy’ variety and not a crystal clear vinegar, or it will not have the same effect.

Ms Hohaia also recommends taking a therapeutic-grade probiotic with researched bacterial strains to help

correct the gut’s bacterial population.

“Probiotics are not going to work immediately and I clinically find most people notice a benefit within a two-week time frame after taking them daily,” she says.

FROM THE PHYSIOTHERAPIST

Physiotherapist Irena Nurkic’s top tip is to normalise bowel action frequency, optimise

stool consistency and achieve easy and complete bowel emptying.

She explains constipation delays gas transit in the gut and difficulty emptying the bowel is associated with tense pelvic floor muscles, which can resist gas flow and lead to bloating.

Ms Nurkic says continence and women’s health physiotherapists can help patients manage constipation through diet modification (in alliance with dietitians) and teaching pelvic floor muscle exercises.

How you sit on the toilet is a great start. She says to check if you are using the correct position, keep the following advice in mind:

Knees should be higher than the hips, try using a footstool.

Knees should be apart and legs relaxed.

Elbows should be leaning on knees with straight back (no C-curved back). Imagine you have a marble in your belly button and you want to tip it out by leaning forward and resting your elbows on your knees.

Tummy or abdomen must relax (let it drop forward). If the tummy is pulled in, “exit” muscles will be tightening, so let go of your tummy and keep it soft.

FROM THE DIETITIAN

Dietitian Charlene Grosse says a group of carbohydrates (referred to as FODMAPs) breaks down in the gut and can cause bloating and flatulence.

A low-FODMAP diet is used worldwide as a key management for people suffering with irritable bowel syndrome, Ms Grosse says.

She says foods containing FODMAPs include:

Foods containing lactose:

“Dairy products such as cow’s milk, ice-cream, and some

yoghurts are difficult for some to digest.”

Foods containing artificial

sweeteners: “When consumed in big amounts, sweeteners such as aspartame, sorbitol and mannitol can lead to bloating.”

Foods high in carbohydrate

fructose: Such as honey, apples, mango, and pear.

Legumes: Including baked

beans, chickpeas, and lentils.

Foods containing fructans:

Such as artichokes, garlic, onion, leek and the white portion of spring onions.

She advises that a low-FODMAP diet is not meant to be followed long term and people who have bloating after meals should seek the advice of an accredited practising dietitian.

BLOATING FOODS:

DIETITIAN CHARLENE GROSSE

Carbonated drinks:

“(They) increase the amount of air in the stomach when consumed,” she says. “Most may be eliminated by belching but for some people it passes into the small intestine, causing increased bloating.”

Chewing gum: “Chewing also results in aerophagia, excessive air swallowing,” she says.

Soluble fibre: “Soluble fibre (in oats, legumes, beans and most



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fruit) can cause gas and bloating," she says.

Lactose: "Lactose intolerance is caused by an impaired ability to digest lactose, the principle sugar in dairy products," she says. "Symptoms of intolerance include diarrhoea, abdominal pain, bloating and flatulence."

MEDICAL CAUSES

Charlene Grosse says people with diabetes or scleroderma may, over time, suffer bloating due to a slowing in the small intestine.



Getty Images

GO THE CUPPA

Did your mum ever tell you that a nice cup of peppermint tea would help bloating? Turns out she was right.

"Peppermint tea is good at helping digestion, which in turn could help settle bloating," naturopath Melissa Hohaia says. "It's a nice one to have after a meal."

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