



**F**rom beer to chicken wings, pizza to submarine sandwiches, and chips to peanuts to Cheetos, you can bet that millions of Americans will be camped out on sofas everywhere during Feb. 5's Super Bowl game filling their faces with flatulence-causing fare.

Clothespin, anyone? Phew.

Super Bowl party foods have an unspoken dark side that's among society's last taboos: the unsportsmanlike flatulence that results from gastrointestinal distress. Passing the football is OK, but passing gas — well, that's sure to be considered an interference penalty.

Indeed, football fans around the country will be joining the inactive list as their bodies fail to digest a perfect storm of spicy, saucy, salty and fatty foods. But flatulence, stomach pain, bloating, heartburn, indigestion and growling guts are all conditions that can be end-run by fans with a good Super Bowl party defense.

Bill Downs, a medical nutrition researcher from Pennsylvania with more than 20 years' experience in diet, digestion, nutrition science and biological chemistry, started an Internet blog — [www.trafon.blogspot.com](http://www.trafon.blogspot.com) — to create a forum that would provide relevant information, about such an "explosive" topic.

"Sure, there's a lot of humorous stuff on the site, but I hope to give those who visit information to address what is an undiagnosed epidemic," Downs said.

More than 65 percent of Americans suffer from gastrointestinal disorders each year, Downs said. These disorders include acid reflux disease, heartburn and irritable bowel syndrome, as well as

## DON'T LET SUPER BOWL SNACKING LEAD TO GAS AND OTHER FORMS OF STOMACH DISTRESS

By Jennifer Kellar Erwin ■ Gazette Staff Reporter

Chron's disease, which is a chronic disorder that inflames the digestive or GI tract and includes the small intestine or the colon.

"We're talking about a much larger population of people that suffer from what we refer to as 'subclinical' symptoms, evidenced by excessive flatulence," he said. "Excessive flatulence — I mean, if you're passing gas anywhere between 30 and 50 times a day — or have loose or watery stools, or heavy constipation."

Gross, eh? Maybe, but gastrointestinal distress, in any form, is a real problem since its sufferers seem to be medicinally sedating their problems, rather than taking necessary precautions to deplete them.

And according to Downs, we as a society asked for it.

"This is the first generation where the parents are healthier than the kids, and that's not a very great claim to fame," he said. "We've asked for this instant gratification society. We've asked for fast foods, which have beaten the living daylight out of our digestive systems. It's kind of like the

reason you get a callous on your hand: If the degree of severity and rate of wear-and-tear on your system outstrips your body's ability to rebuild itself, you accelerate the negative consequences and damaging effects on your body."

In addition, Downs said that stress can wreak havoc on GI tracts, dramatically increasing digestive problems; conversely, digestive problems reduce a person's tolerance to stress. One reason people get gas in the first place is because they don't digest food efficiently.

The best plan of action is to steer clear of refined, processed foods, including processed oils and fats; "white" carbs found in bread, potato chips and pasta; lunchmeat, which is loaded with all kinds of preservatives; or hard-to-digest veggies like broccoli and cauliflower.

Replace the aforementioned with apples, carrots, or celery sticks and drink plenty of water.

While all foods produce some gas, some produce more than others — and the weaker your sys-

tem, the more amplified the gassy result.

If you're going to eat that hot dog, you may want to skip dumping the sauerkraut on top of it, Downs said.

But if you insist on "gorging on garbage" during Super Bowl, how can you get some relief?

Downs suggests purchasing high-potency enzyme tablets that aid in the breakdown of food. These products contain natural amino acids, digestive enzymes and essential fatty acids that have been found to be beneficial in enhancing digestive function. They also can be found in local health food stores.

Beano has proven effective to ease the pressure of a bloated midsection, especially after the consumption of beans, broccoli and cauliflower.

However, Downs recommends steering clear of popping an antacid, which "aborts digestion and shuts down the acid process for the necessary disintegration of food."

"And if you really don't care about having too many friends, go right ahead and suck down the hardboiled eggs and beer," he said.

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### BILL'S BACKGROUND

Downs has more than 20 years of expertise in diet, digestion, nutrition science and biological chemistry. He's also published several peer-reviewed studies, and is the author of [www.trafon.blogspot.com](http://www.trafon.blogspot.com), the first blog to promote serious discussion on the root causes of digestive disorders, gastrointestinal diseases, and what people can do about them.