

Beaver County Times

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Don't super-size the methane

Charles Leroux
Chicago Tribune

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth.

John (Chapter III, verse 8)

Is Super Bowl Sunday a holy day for you and your friends?

Are you thinking about the feast: the cheese and sausage plate, the hot wings and hot dogs, the chili with beans, some pizza, cheeseburgers, the bean dip — all of which you'll wash down with a beer or four and some pop. Maybe, in a concession to healthy eating, you'll dip into the broccoli and cauliflower.

You knoweth not what you do.

Bill Downs is here to inform you that the typical Super Bowl party turns the gastrointestinal tract (or GI as pros like him call it) into a natural gas pipeline — specifically people's gas. Your party could go up in flames — if you're into that game — or at least become a series of what Downs calls "methane moments."

Certainly by the end of the first quarter, said Downs, 54, a special-

ist in the causes and calming of flatulence, "It's time to stand back, there's gonna be an earthquake!"

Downs, a nutritional biologist and president of Allied Nutraceutical Ingredients, a company dealing with dietary supplements, explained that the usual fare of such parties is also pretty much the top 10 list of gas-producing compounds.

"First you're probably putting a massive amount of food in there compared to what you're used to. Whereas you'll usually eat a sandwich, if you cut 5 of them up in quarters and put them on a plate, over the course of the pre-game, the game, the post-game, you'll eat them all.

"Also, you're throwing together things you digest quickly, like the sugar in sodas with things like cheese that are blockers and can take three hours to digest. Red meat also is slow, so a cheeseburger is a real challenge to the system."

While you may look at the burger's bun and think it's just a bun, Downs sees it as "processed, refined, easily fermentable starch." And the broccoli and cauliflower you were hoping would balance out all the bad stuff are

"the most gas-producing veggies on the planet."

In fact, he said, if he were entering a flatulence-making contest, he'd eat eggs, beer and broccoli.

The embarrassing moment at the party is as inevitable as a game-changing turnover, he said. "The only question is how much and how foul."

On his Web site, www.trafon.com (spell it backwards for a clue; and, if you're in a cubicle surrounded by people in other cubicles, turn off your sound before you go there), Downs offers some tips on avoiding the Super Bowl passing game.

Start the day with oatmeal. It's calming and cushioning for the assault to come. Eat an apple, a pear, some grapes, celery, carrots. You'll still eat the hot dog, but you'll be adding some water, fiber and nutrients. Take some digestive enzymes from the health food store. Afterward, drink green tea to reduce inflation.

And, he said, when the inevitable becomes uncontrollable, know the crowd. Some folks will simply pretend to ignore the fumes and hope for the wind to shift, while others will "get out the matches and have some fun."