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# SMOGCHECK

NOT YOUR CAR'S EMISSIONS ... YOUR EMISSIONS!  
WHAT CAN YOU DO TO LIMIT THE AMOUNT OF GAS YOU PASS?

BY IVY DAI  
STAFF WRITER

It inevitably happens on long trips, elevator rides and social gatherings. Someone rips a big one. The gagging aroma of rotten eggs sets in, and everyone looks around to see whodunit.

Flatulence, more crudely known as a fart, and more properly known as flatus — is liked by few, except maybe your little brother, who always takes the opportunity to pass gas in your face.

Flatus, however, has long been a popular social and cultural topic — a Monty Python sketch shows people farting and blowing up. Kids and adults make farting sounds with their armpits and their mouth.

Flatus is definitely funny and gross. However to some people, excessive gas becomes a real source of embarrassment.

Passing gas about five to 15 times a day is normal, but more than that is not. Too much gas can be a sign of a digestive disorder and unhealthy eating, according to Bill Downs, a diet and digestion expert who runs the world's only fart blog (trafon.org — spelled backwards is "no fart").

Flatus happens when you eat foods like eggs, broccoli, cauliflower, brussel sprouts, beans and cabbage.

Refined flours, sugars, alcohol and foods with air like soda also increases flatulence. Champagne is twice as bad because it has both alcohol and air. Processed foods create more gas because they break down quickly, Downs said.

"If it's white it ain't right," Downs said. "Chew well. And put some grains in the salad. Iceberg lettuce is just colored water."

Have you ever noticed that you get especially gassy at parties? Well that's because we eat more food, and more bad food, when we're at social gatherings, Downs said.

Think about your last Super Bowl party — did the beer, chicken wings, soda and chips cause you to toot a little more?

If you're the guest, steer clear of the fried fatty foods, soda and beer. If you're the host, serve healthier options. Downs served Japanese shabu-shabu at his last Super Bowl. Guests put chunks of fish, meat, tofu and vegetables in a pot of boiling soup, and dipped them in flavorful sauces. This dish



RAUL ROA / STAFF

**Jon Welch, 24, of Chino, left, illustrates how someone would react at noticing a friend, in this case Derek Mireles, 21, of Chino, when flatulence-causing foods are consumed and the full effects of the gastronomic rumbblings begin to take effect. Flatulence-causing foods include beer, broccoli, cauliflower, eggs, refined flours, refined sugars, cabbage, dairy products and beans.**

is both fun and healthy.

Avoiding gas is not just about saving face though. Over time, unhealthy eating habits can lead to colon cancer and serious intestinal disorders.

About 80 percent of the lymphatic tissue in your immune system lies in the gastrointestinal (GI) tract, according to Downs.

"While I make it humorous on my blog, excessive flatulence is a system of underlying digestive challenges," Downs said. "Food stays in the GI tract because the quality of food is diminished, and food is not being properly disintegrated and dissolved."

Unhealthy eating habits can not only lead to more gas, but also adult acne. Toxins from bad food

stay in the body, and erupt on the skin, Downs said.

Flatus is made of carbon dioxide, nitrogen and methane. The silent-but-deadly flatulence, which smells more, contains more methane and bacteria, and can be a sign of other health issues, like high cholesterol.

Dr. George Ferenczi, a gastroenterologist and associate professor of medicine at the University of Southern California, treats patients with intestinal disorders everyday.

Patients who come into his Glendora clinic talk to him about their challenges with excessive gas.

"Nobody has blown up yet," Ferenczi said. "However, some people worry about it and are concerned about embarrassment in

public, so they take over the counter medication like Beano, Gas-X, or Lactate for it."

Ferenczi suggested limiting intake of gas-producing foods, and keeping your mouth closed while chewing so you don't swallow additional air.

People who are lactose intolerant and consume dairy products can also have increased flatulence, so avoid eating dairy if your body can't process it.

A normal amount of gas to pass is a couple hundred cubic centimeters a day, Ferenczi said. If excessive gas is paired with frequent diarrhea, weight loss, fever, or blood in the stool, it may be a sign of an intestinal disorder. Contact your doctor if you experience any

of these symptoms.

For normal everyday gas, Downs suggested taking broad-spectrum enzymes that include protease, lipase, amylase, cellulase and lactase. Some over-the-counter medications that have broad-spectrum enzymes include Nature's Plus and Ultrazyme (with or without Vibragest).

For the rest of us though, enduring those smelly bouts of foul air is a fact of life. You may know someone who toots just a little too often, and the stench is unbearable. For people like this, Downs has a suggestion - send them a gassy greeting card at [trafon.org/gcc](http://trafon.org/gcc).

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