

Let's Talk...

Wind



What is wind?

Wind is completely normal. It is simply gas in your digestive system that your body needs to release. This can happen in two ways: upwards through the mouth as a burp (belching) or downwards through the bottom (flatulence or passing wind).

Wind is something we all experience every day. It is a natural byproduct of a working digestive system.

What causes wind?

It can happen for a few common reasons, such as swallowing air when you eat, drink, talk or chew gum. Gas is also produced naturally when the friendly bacteria in your large bowel break down and digest certain foods. Some foods like beans, onions and broccoli, as well as fizzy drinks, are famous for producing more wind.

Sometimes, an excess of wind can leave you feeling bloated, uncomfortably full, or dealing with sharp, crampy pains from trapped gas. With taboo still surrounding our guts, we understand why you might feel hesitant to mention it, but we're here to flush away the stigma surrounding our guts. Why? Because our guts and what they do are a crucial part of our health. The more you know about digestive symptoms such as wind, the easier it can be to manage it and understand when it could be a sign of something more serious and needs medical attention.



How should I treat

excessive or trapped wind?

If you're experiencing uncomfortable or frequent wind, it can usually be managed at home with a few small adjustments to your daily life.

Eating

Try to slow down when you eat and drink. Chewing your food thoroughly and avoiding talking whilst eating reduces the amount of air you swallow. Sit up straight whilst eating to help your gut process food efficiently.

Food and drink

Keep a food diary for a week or two to see if certain foods are causing extra wind. You might choose to cut down on known culprits such as fizzy drinks, artificial sweeteners like sorbitol, or excessive amounts of vegetables high in fibre. However, it's still important to make sure you're getting a balanced diet.

Movement

Getting moving is one of the best ways to shift trapped wind. Try a short walk after each meal or gentle stretches. Both can help move gas through your gut more quickly, helping to relieve pressure and pain.

Avoid swallowing air

Try to limit habits that cause you to swallow extra air, such as smoking, drinking through a straw, or chewing gum. If you wear dentures, making sure they fit properly can also help.

Medicine

Over-the-counter remedies are available from pharmacies without a prescription. Products containing simethicone can help break up gas bubbles in your gut, while activated charcoal tablets or peppermint oil capsules can help ease the discomfort of trapped wind.



How can I avoid

excessive or trapped wind?

While you can never stop wind entirely (and you shouldn't be made to feel that way - it's natural and we all pass it!), you can keep excessive or uncomfortable gas at bay by looking after your eating routine day-to-day. You can do this by:

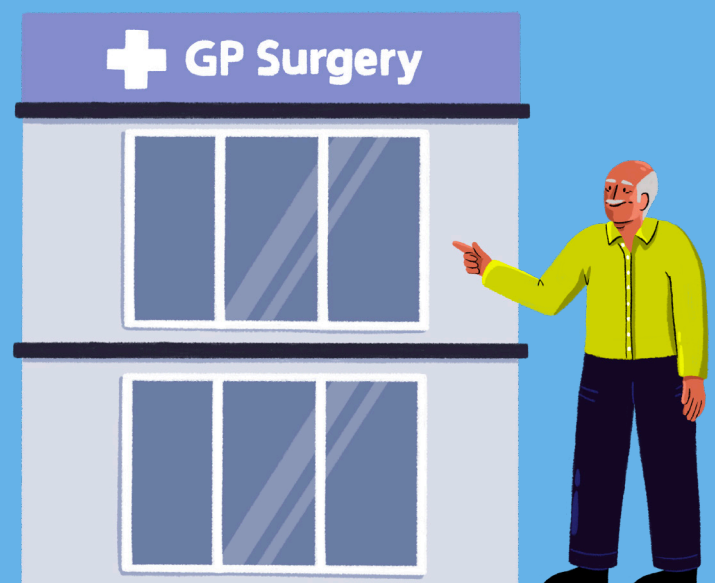
- Eating smaller, more regular meals to avoid overloading your gut.
- Sipping drinks slowly instead of gulping them.
- Keeping active where possible, to support your gut's natural rhythm.
- Avoiding tight clothing around your waist, which can trap gas and make wind feel worse.

When should I seek medical advice?

If you have noticed a significant, unexplained change in your wind that lasts for more than a few weeks, or if lifestyle changes aren't helping, you should seek medical advice. You should also seek medical advice from your doctor or NHS 111 sooner if your wind is accompanied by any of the following:

- If you notice blood in your poo or bleeding from your bottom.
- If you have lost weight without meaning to.
- If you are experiencing severe, constant or worsening belly pain.
- If you have ongoing diarrhoea or constipation.
- If you are feeling constantly sick (nausea).
- If you feel like food is getting stuck in your throat when you swallow.

Excessive or particularly bad-smelling wind, when combined with other symptoms, can sometimes be a sign of an underlying digestive condition or a food intolerance. It's always a good idea to get persistent changes checked out by your GP.



How do I tell someone that I have wind?

Telling your doctor

If you feel like your wind is a cause for concern, speak to your doctor. Be honest about how long you've experienced it and whether you're burping more or passing wind out of your bottom more than usual. If you've had any other symptoms, such as pain or bloating, it's important to tell them about that too. Sharing the impact it's having on your daily life can help them provide the right treatment and care.

Telling your employer

You might want to tell your employer if trapped wind is causing you severe physical discomfort or making you anxious about working in a quiet environment. If it is tied to a diagnosed digestive condition, letting them know can help them to support you. That could be by allowing you breaks to step away or offering a more comfortable workspace or way of working.

Telling your family and friends

If you're experiencing wind, you don't need to hide it. It's something everyone will have experienced before. But if you're feeling uncomfortable and need to adjust your plans with loved ones, telling them what is happening can help.

How do I know what's normal for me?

Paying attention to how your body reacts to different foods, as well as checking your poo regularly, are great ways to get to know your normal. Passing wind is something everyone does but it's important to spot if something changes for you. The amount of gas we produce is unique to our own gut bacteria and diets, but overall gut comfort can be a great indicator of your health.

For more information about wind, including causes, diagnosis, treatment and support, go to gutscharity.org.uk/symptoms/wind.

Our online Poo-Torial tool can help you to better understand your digestive health by looking at the colour, consistency and frequency of your poo. Go to gutscharity.org.uk/poo-torial to try it now.



Guts UK is the national charity for the digestive system. We provide information and support on more than 40 digestive conditions and symptoms, as well as health and lifestyle. Go to gutscharity.org.uk/information to find out more. Need support? Contact our Helpline on **0300 102 4887** or gutscharity.org.uk/helpline.

Please note, this information is intended for people without a diagnosed digestive condition. If you live with a digestive condition and need information and support for wind or gas, please speak to your healthcare team.

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