



BLOATING AND WIND

Many people living with [Crohn's or Colitis](#) sometimes feel bloated or gassy. These symptoms can make you uncomfortable or be painful. And tummy noises, loud farts and strong smells can sometimes be embarrassing.

No matter how you're affected, we're here to support you.

Whether you regularly have bloating and wind, or you're supporting someone who does, we have suggestions and tips to help.

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KEY FACTS ABOUT BLOATING AND WIND

- Bloating is a feeling of fullness, pressure or trapped wind in your tummy. Wind is gas inside your gut. You get rid of it when you burp or fart.
- Bloating and wind can happen for lots of different reasons.
- There are lots of things you do to try to ease bloating and wind.



- Keeping a record of what you eat and your symptoms can help you notice if any foods make your symptoms worse.
- Some people find it helps to eat several small meals a day instead of fewer large meals.
- It can help to drink plenty of fluid and take regular, gentle exercise.

WHAT ARE BLOATING AND WIND?

Bloating is a feeling of fullness, pressure or trapped wind in your tummy. Some people may notice their tummy get bigger when they feel bloated.

Wind is gas inside your gut. You get rid of it from your body when you:

- Fart, known as flatus
- Burp, known as belching

Everyone burps and farts, but it can sometimes be embarrassing.

CAUSES OF BLOATING AND WIND

It's common to have gas in your gut, whether you have Crohn's or Colitis or not. Everyone produces several litres of gas a day through the usual processes of digestion. But only around 200ml, which is a bit less than a cupful, usually stays in your gut.

- Some gas is absorbed into your bloodstream. Your body reuses this or gets rid of it when you breathe out.
- The rest of the gas is released when you burp or fart. The number of times you fart a day varies from person to person. Sometimes you might not even be aware you're doing it.



Bloating and wind commonly affect people with Crohn's or Colitis. They can develop for lots of reasons, including:

- Problems breaking down or absorbing certain foods: Your body may not absorb or digest sugars or starchy foods well. This means they pass into your large bowel, where bacteria can feed on them and produce gas.
- Changes in the balance of bacteria in your gut: This can lead to more gas being made.
- Constipation: This can slow the movement of food through your gut and may stop gas escaping.
- Gut sensitivity: Your gut may be more sensitive than usual to gas or other bowel contents.
- Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS): IBS is a common digestive condition. Some symptoms are similar to Crohn's or Colitis. But they are two very different conditions. Bloating is a common symptom of IBS. More than 3 in 10 people with Crohn's or Colitis also have IBS, or IBS-like symptoms. Some people with IBS may have gut symptoms even if their Crohn's or Colitis is under control.
- Coeliac disease: Coeliac disease is an autoimmune disease. The body's immune system attacks the tissues in the small bowel when you eat gluten. This can cause a range of tummy problems. If you have coeliac disease, you may be more likely to develop Crohn's or Colitis than the general population. And if you have Crohn's or Colitis, you are more likely to develop coeliac disease, but to a smaller extent.
- Lactose intolerance: Lactose is a sugar found in dairy products, such as milk, cream and cheese. People with lactose intolerance do not digest lactose properly. Instead, it is fermented by the gas-producing bacteria in your large bowel. People with Crohn's may be slightly more likely to have lactose intolerance than people with Colitis or the general population. Some people with Crohn's or Colitis only get symptoms of lactose intolerance during a flare-up.



- Complications of Crohn's or Colitis: Bloating can also be due to complications of Crohn's or Colitis, like scar tissue from surgery. Rarely, it can be a sign of a more serious condition, such as toxic megacolon. Toxic megacolon can happen if you have severe inflammation in your large bowel. The bowel wall becomes thin, and the large bowel can become bloated with gas.

Contact NHS 111 straight away if you have signs of toxic megacolon. This includes:

- A high temperature
 - Pain
 - Tenderness in the tummy.
- Swallowing air: Some people might swallow too much air. Everyone swallows air when they eat, drink or talk. Some people swallow more air than others. You swallow more air if you smoke or chew gum.

THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP YOUR SYMPTOMS

Everyone is different. What works for one person may not work for another. But some people have found the suggestions below helpful.

Think about the way you eat

- Try to create a relaxed environment when you eat. Stress can affect how your body digests food.
- Eat slowly with your mouth closed. Chewing each mouthful thoroughly lowers the amount of air you swallow with your food.
- Try eating several small meals a day instead of fewer large meals.



- Eating a large meal late at night can make some people feel uncomfortable. Try leaving longer between eating and going to bed.

"I don't get as bloated if I eat small, regular meals, around six times a day, rather than larger meals less often."

JAKE
LIVING WITH CROHN'S

Think about the food you eat

Certain foods can make bloating or wind worse. A [food diary](#) or app could help you notice if any foods make your symptoms worse. Make a note of everything you eat and any possible effects you have.

"I find high fat and high sugar foods make tummy gurgles and wind worse for me so I try to avoid them."

MARIE-GAELE
LIVING WITH COLITIS

Some people find that the following foods affect them:

- Foods that contain starches that can be difficult to digest. This includes:
 - Onions
 - Leeks
 - Lentils
 - Cabbage
 - Brussels sprouts
 - Asparagus
 - Beans



- Wheat products, including:
 - Breads
 - Breakfast cereals
 - Pasta
 - Cakes
 - Pastries

Some people use wheat alternatives instead, like rye, corn, oat or rice products. But there is not much evidence to know whether or not this is helpful for people with Crohn's or Colitis.

- Sugary foods, especially foods that contain a sugar called sorbitol. This is found naturally in some fruits. It's also used as an artificial sweetener.
- Fatty foods. You could try lower-fat options, or baked or grilled foods instead of fried.
- Dairy products like milk, cheese or yoghurts. If dairy makes your symptoms worse, you could try non-dairy alternatives like soy, oat, rice or nut milks. But try to choose products with added calcium.
- Spicy foods.
- Foods high in bran fibre, like brown bread and some cereals. Unless you have a stricture, there is no need to limit fibre in general. You could try foods high in soluble fibre instead, like ispaghula or linseed. These can actually help symptoms.

If you find any possible trigger foods, discuss them with your IBD team before you make any big changes to your diet. Your IBD team can check that you are eating a balanced diet. They may be able to refer you to a dietitian.

If you do cut down on possible trigger foods, it may take a few weeks to notice any difference. It's important to get back to eating a healthy, balanced diet when you start to feel better.



If you think you have lactose intolerance

If you think you may have lactose intolerance, talk to your IBD team. They can arrange tests and advise you on the best way to manage your symptoms.

If you have Crohn's or Colitis and you also have lactose intolerance, cutting down on foods and drinks that contain lactose might help ease bloating and wind. You could choose dairy alternatives with added calcium or look for lactose-free dairy products. Check the ingredients on foods you buy to see if they contain lactose.

Find out more about lactose intolerance in our information on [food](#).

If you have IBS

If you have irritable bowel syndrome as well as Crohn's or Colitis, a low FODMAP diet might help ease bloating and wind. But there is not enough high-quality evidence to know for sure if it's effective.

FODMAP stands for Fermentable Oligosaccharides, Disaccharides, Monosaccharides and Polyols. These are carbohydrates that are hard to digest. When the undigested carbohydrates move through your gut, they feed bacteria in your large bowel. This releases gas and can lead to bloating and wind.

A low FODMAP diet is restrictive and is not designed to be followed long-term. If you follow a low FODMAP diet, you should speak to a dietitian first.

We have more detail on a low FODMAP diet in our information on [food](#).

Drinking

Drink plenty. You should drink around 6 to 8 cups or glasses of fluid a day.

You might also find it helpful to:



- Limit the caffeine you have in coffee, tea, cola or other drinks. You could try drinking peppermint tea instead.
- Avoid fizzy drinks because they contain gas.
- Drink slowly instead of gulping down large amounts. Some people with Crohn's or Colitis say that drinking a lot in one go makes them gassy. Some people find this worse if they drink in this way at mealtimes. For some people, taking sips rather than large gulps of liquid can help.
- Not drink too much alcohol.

Other tips

- Some people find that moving around, sitting or lying in different positions helps their symptoms. Gas moves through your gut faster when you sit up or stand, rather than lie down. When you are in bed, you could try lying in different positions to see if any feel more comfortable.
- Massaging your stomach from right to left can help to release trapped gas.
- Try to take regular gentle exercise to help gas move through your gut. Some people find a short walk after a meal helps.
- If your lifestyle is not very active, increasing your physical activity might help your symptoms. For example, if you sit for a long time at work, try to take regular breaks to move around.
- Wear clothes that are not too tight around your waist. These could put extra pressure on your tummy.
- Stress can affect your digestive system. If you experience stress, try to find ways to help you manage it. The NHS has [tips on managing stress](#). Or you might also find our information on [Mental health and wellbeing](#) helpful.
- If you're not able to control when you fart, you might find it useful to look at our information on [Bowel incontinence](#).



Herbal therapies, medicines and supplements

Some people use herbal therapies or herbal medicines to help with bloating and wind. At the moment, there is not much evidence to support these.

You should tell your IBD team if you take any herbal remedies or medicines that you have bought yourself. They can sometimes interact with prescribed medicines.

"I feel less bloated after exercise, and drinking peppermint tea helps too."

RACHEL
LIVING WITH CROHN'S

- Peppermint can improve symptoms like bloating and wind in people with IBS. But there is no evidence to know if it has the same effect for people with Crohn's or Colitis. You can buy it from pharmacies, supermarkets or online. Different brands are available as capsules or liquid medicine.
- Some people find that a medicine called simeticone helps with bloating and wind. You can buy it from pharmacies, supermarkets or online. Different brands are available as tablets, capsules or liquid medicine. Simeticone helps gas bubbles pass more easily through your gut. It does not get absorbed into your bloodstream.
- Some people say herbal remedies like chamomile, fennel or peppermint help ease wind. But there is no high-quality evidence to know whether they work in people with Crohn's or Colitis.
- Some people with IBS find that probiotics help their symptoms. Probiotics are foods or supplements that contain friendly bacteria. You can buy them as:
 - Drinks
 - Yoghurts
 - Tablets
 - Powders



Fermented foods that are probiotic include:

- Miso
- Kefir
- Kimchi
- Tempeh
- Sauerkraut
- Kombucha

There is no high-quality evidence that these ease bloating or wind for people with Crohn's or Colitis. But, alongside prescribed medicines, they might help some people with mildly active Ulcerative Colitis get the condition under control. Some people get bloating as a side effect of probiotics. If you're thinking of taking probiotics, speak to your IBD team.

GETTING RID OF SMELLS

If you're worried about smells, you could try:

- Making sure the room you're in is well-ventilated.
- Lighting a scented candle, wax melt, aromatherapy oil burner or incense stick.
- Using an air freshener. You could use a solid block freshener that works all the time, or a freshener that releases a fragrance at regular intervals.
- Using neutralising sprays or gels to help get rid of smells. You can get these from pharmacies, supermarkets or online.
- Wearing underwear or pads that absorb smells. These are made using activated carbon fabrics that filter and trap gases. You can also get odour-absorbing bedding, cushions and other products. They're available to buy online. Try searching 'odour filtering clothes'.



HELP AND SUPPORT FROM CROHN'S & COLITIS UK

We're here for you. Our information covers a wide range of topics. From treatment options to symptoms, relationship concerns to employment issues, our information can help you manage your condition. We'll help you find answers, access support and take control.

All information is available on our [website](#).

Helpline service

Our helpline team provides up-to-date, evidence-based information. You can find out more on our [helpline web page](#). Our team can support you to live well with Crohn's or Colitis.

Our Helpline team can provide support by:

- Providing information about Crohn's and Colitis
- Listening and talking through your situation
- Helping you to find support from others in the Crohn's and Colitis community
- Providing details of other specialist organisations

You can call the Helpline on **0300 222 5700**. Or visit our [LiveChat service](#). You can read our information on [when the Helpline](#) is open for more details..

You can email helpline@crohnsandcolitis.org.uk at any time. The Helpline will aim to respond to your email within three working days.

Our helpline also offers a language interpretation service, which allows us to speak to callers in their preferred language.

Virtual Social Events

We offer people affected by Crohn's or Colitis the chance to join a virtual social event with others across the UK. The events will be a chance to chat, share



experiences and potentially learn from others. Each event may have a specific topic but the overall discussion will be driven by what those attending wish to talk about.

Family, friends and colleagues are more than welcome to attend.

Visit our [Virtual Social Events](#) page to find out what is available.

Crohn's & Colitis UK Forum

This closed-group Facebook community is for anyone affected by Crohn's or Colitis. You can share your experiences and receive support from others. Find out more about the [Crohn's & Colitis UK Forum](#).

Help with toilet access when out

There are many benefits to becoming a member of Crohn's & Colitis UK. One of these is a free RADAR key to unlock accessible toilets. Another is a Can't Wait Card. This card shows that you have a medical condition. It will help when you are out and need urgent access to the toilet. See [our membership webpage](#) for more information. Or you can call the Membership Team on **01727 734465**.

HOW TO HELP OTHERS LIVING WITH CROHN'S OR COLITIS

We want to make a difference to people affected by Crohn's or Colitis. But we can't do that without help.

If you want to support others in our community, here are some ways you can get involved:

- Volunteering: If you'd like to volunteer, we have a range of ways you can get involved. Find out more about our [volunteering roles](#).
- Campaigning: None of our award-winning campaigns would be possible without our amazing community of dedicated campaigners. Your voice really does matter. Find out more about [joining our Campaigner Network](#).



- Fundraising: Every pound you give helps power our life-changing work. Together we'll create bold campaigns, fund pioneering research, and give vital support when people need it most. Find out about ways to [fundraise](#).
- Research: Research aims to improve the lives of people living with Crohn's or Colitis. One day, it may even find a cure. But good quality research can only happen when people with Crohn's or Colitis are involved. Find out about ways [you can be involved in future research](#).
- Share your story. We hear from people every day who rely on the Crohn's and Colitis community for help and support. Why not [share your story](#) to help others feel seen or inspired?

ABOUT CROHN'S & COLITIS UK

We're Crohn's & Colitis UK and we're changing what it means to live with these lifelong gut conditions. 1 in 123 people in the UK have Crohn's Disease or Ulcerative Colitis. These are unpredictable conditions that could flare up at any time.

No one should face that alone. That's where we can help.

We provide trusted information and support cutting-edge research. We also lead bold campaigns to get more people talking about Crohn's and Colitis. We help people understand these conditions, give them the attention they deserve and bring people together to create change.

This year, 25,000 people will be told they have Crohn's or Colitis. Once diagnosed, the obstacles continue. Today, there is no cure. People simply don't understand these conditions. So, we have listened. It's time for change & we're leading the way.

Our information is available thanks to the generosity of our supporters and members. Find out how you can join the fight against Crohn's and Colitis by calling **01727 734465**. Or you can visit [our website](#).



About our information

We follow strict processes to make sure our information is based on up-to-date evidence and is easy to understand. We produce it with patients, medical advisers and other professionals. It is not intended to replace advice from your own healthcare professional.

You can find out more on [our website](https://www.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk).

We hope that you've found this information helpful. Please email us at evidence@crohnsandcolitis.org.uk if:

- You have any comments or suggestions for improvements
- You would like more information about the evidence we use
- You would like details of any conflicts of interest

You can also write to us at **Crohn's & Colitis UK, 1 Bishops Square, Hatfield, Herts, AL10 9NE**. Or you can contact us through the **Helpline** on **0300 222 5700**.

We do not endorse any products mentioned in our information.

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