Gas and Bloating: After Your Visit

Your Kaiser Permanente Care Instructions

Gas and bloating can be uncomfortable and embarrassing problems. All people pass gas, but some people produce more gas than others, sometimes enough to cause distress. It is normal to pass gas from 6 to 20 times per day. Excess gas usually is not caused by a serious health problem.

Gas and bloating usually are caused by something you eat or drink, including some food supplements and medicines.

Gas and bloating are usually harmless and go away without treatment. However, changing your diet can help end the problem. Some over-the-counter medicines can help prevent gas and relieve bloating.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It’s also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

• Keep a food diary if you think a food gives you gas. Write down what you eat or drink. Also record when you get gas. If you notice that a food seems to cause your gas each time, avoid it and see if the gas goes away. Examples of foods that cause gas include:
  • Fried and fatty foods.
  • Beans.
  • Vegetables such as artichokes, asparagus, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, cucumbers, green peppers, onions, peas, radishes, and raw potatoes.
  • Fruits such as apricots, bananas, melons, peaches, pears, prunes, and raw apples.
  • Wheat and wheat bran.
Soak dry beans in water overnight, then dump the water and cook the soaked beans in new water. This can help prevent gas and bloating.

If you have problems with lactose, avoid dairy products such as milk and cheese.

Try not to swallow air. Do not drink through a straw, gulp your food, or chew gum.

Take an over-the-counter medicine. Read and follow all instructions on the label.
  • Food enzymes, such as Beano, can be added to gas-producing foods to prevent gas.
  • Antacids, such as Di-Gel, Maalox Anti-Gas, and Mylanta Gas, can relieve bloating by making you burp.
  • Activated charcoal tablets, such as CharcoCaps, may decrease odor from gas you pass.
  • If you have problems with lactose, you can take medicines such as Dairy Ease and Lactaid with dairy products to prevent gas and bloating.

Get some exercise regularly.

When should you call for help?

Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

• You have gas and signs of a heart attack, such as:
  • Chest pain or pressure.
  • Sweating.
  • Shortness of breath.
  • Nausea or vomiting.
  • Pain that spreads from the chest to the neck, jaw, or one or both shoulders or arms.
  • Dizziness or lightheadedness.
  • A fast or uneven pulse.

After calling 911, chew 1 adult-strength aspirin. Wait for an ambulance. Do not try to drive yourself.

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

• You have severe belly pain.
• You have blood in your stool.
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Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You have blood or pus in your urine.
- Your urine is cloudy or smells bad.
- You are burping and have trouble swallowing.
- You feel bloated and have swelling in your belly.
- You do not get better as expected.

Where can you learn more?

Go to http://www.kp.org

Enter W582 in the search box to learn more about "Gas and Bloating: After Your Visit".

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