10 Coping Techniques for IBS Bloating

by EMMI SCOTT

Avoiding and Managing IBS Bloating

Bloating can be one of the most frustrating parts of living with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). It can feel uncomfortable, unflattering and even painful. Unfortunately, bloating is one of the most common symptoms of IBS , but understanding its causes and how to prevent it can help.

Causes of Bloating

Bloating is when your stomach feels distended, which is often worse after eating for those who have IBS.

Some causes of this condition include excess gas production and abnormal functioning of the muscles of the digestive system. Both of these can be affected by many factors.

Bloating is often caused by how and what you eat. Eating too much or too fast can result in a bloated tummy. It can also be attributed to dietary causes, such as fiber, dairy, or fatty foods. If you have IBS, eating foods that you have sensitivities to is a common culprit of bloating.

Fortunately, by paying close attention to your eating habits and recording everything in your IBS symptom diary, you can prevent bloating from happening. If you are already experiencing its effects, there are many ways to soothe it.

How to Prevent IBS Bloating

The best-case scenario with bloating is to prevent it before it happens. Managing these diet and lifestyle factors can help you avoid having to deal with a swollen belly.

1. Eat Small, Regular Meals

Eating too much at once can lead to bloating after a meal. Eat small meals regularly throughout the day to allow your body to more easily digest food.

2. Eat Slowly

It takes 20 minutes for your brain to realize your stomach is full, so if you are scarfing down a meal more quickly than that, you risk overeating and feeling bloated.

When you eat too quickly, you also swallow more air along with your food. This produces gas, expanding your belly.

When eating too fast, you may not chew your food enough and could end up eating larger pieces of food. These

are harder for your digestive system to process than small pieces of food.

These large pieces of food sit in your digestive system longer, adding to the distended feeling that comes with bloating.

Scheduling at least 20 minutes for each meal you eat will allow you to thoroughly chew your food and give your body enough time to realize it is full so you do not overeat.

3. Use Dietary Fiber Wisely

While dietary fiber can assist with constipation, it also causes gas and bloating. Avoid fresh fruits and vegetables, beans and whole grains, which are all foods that are high in dietary fiber.

If you would like to use dietary fiber to lessen the effects of constipation, you can try gradually increasing it in your diet over several weeks. You can also test out taking a fiber supplement, which may not have the same negative impact as dietary fiber on bloating.

4. Avoid Dairy Products

If you are lactose intolerant, dairy products can cause painful bloating and gas as your body struggles to digest lactose. You can try substituting dairy products with lower lactose percentage, or you might want to cut out dairy products altogether.

5. Don’t Eat Fatty Foods

Foods with higher fat content take longer for your digestive system to process. Although fatty foods can help you feel more satisfied after eating, you should avoid them if you have a tendency to bloat.

6. Exercise Regularly

Exercise promotes healthy digestive function, so building a consistent exercise routine can help prevent bloating. If you spend most of the day sitting, you may want to build regular movement breaks into your routine.

7. Stay Hydrated

Water aids in digestive processes, so staying hydrated by drinking water throughout the day is a must, especially when you are feeling bloated.

8. Drink Peppermint Tea

Peppermint has antispasmodic properties, which soothes the smooth muscle in the digestive tract. Drinking peppermint tea or taking peppermint oil in the form of a supplement can reduce the effects of bloating.

9. Consume Ginger

Ginger is a carminative, or an herb, that is known to lessen bloating and gas. It also calms the digestive tract. Ginger is especially helpful in alleviating bloating because it contains pain-relieving properties, which help combat the discomfort of abdominal swelling.

10. Use Probiotics

Some clinical trials have shown that probiotics decrease the symptom of bloating for people with IBS. Probiotic supplements are available, and probiotics are present in foods such as yogurt, sauerkraut and kimchi.

If these suggestions do not work, your doctor or nutritionist may be able to recommend an effective solution.

There are many supplements, over-the-counter medications and prescription medications that a doctor could recommend.

A medical professional may also be able to identify an underlying cause, such as a food sensitivity or bacterial overgrowth.