

Trapped wind

Trapped wind is a common condition that causes pain or discomfort, usually as a result of pressure in your stomach or abdomen which makes you feel bloated and wanting to pass wind.

Trapped wind can be triggered by a number of different things, from eating too quickly to wearing clothes that fit tightly around the waist. Virtually all women suffer from trapped wind at some point in their lives but many women are too embarrassed to admit it, mainly because one of the symptoms of trapped wind is flatulence.

Causes of trapped wind

Trapped wind in your stomach can be caused by swallowing too much air as a result of:

- eating too quickly or eating on the move
- gulping down drinks
- drinking a lot of liquid with a meal
- feeling tense or under stress
- chewing gum
- smoking

Trapped wind in your abdomen can be caused by excess air moving from the stomach into the intestines where it can make you feel bloated until the air is released as flatulence. If you wear clothes that fit tightly around your waist this will increase the pressure on your abdomen and make you even more uncomfortable.

Another cause of abdominal bloating is gas produced by bacteria in your colon as they break down the residue from the small intestine. Most of this gas is absorbed into your blood stream, the rest is released as flatulence.

Symptoms of trapped wind

You can suffer from trapped wind in different parts of your digestive system and this will cause different symptoms, such as a bloated stomach, bloated abdomen and flatulence.

The most common symptoms of trapped wind are: -

- a bloated stomach
- a bloated abdomen
- feeling uncomfortably full after eating

- rumbling or gurgling noises in your stomach or abdomen
- flatulence

Prevention

If you suffer regularly from trapped wind, try to work out what's causing the symptoms. A bloated stomach may be caused by swallowing too much air, particularly while you're eating, whereas abdominal bloating and flatulence could be a sign that you've eaten something that causes extra gas to be produced in your colon.

In general, the following steps can help you to avoid the symptoms of trapped wind:

- Eat regular meals
- Try not to rush a meal or eat on the move
- Don't gulp down drinks
- Drink alcohol in moderation
- Try to relax and de-stress before eating
- Avoid wearing clothes that fit tightly around your waist, particularly when you eat

Avoid food and drinks that are more likely to cause trapped wind:

- cabbage, cauliflower, brussel sprouts
- turnips, onions, leeks
- garlic
- fennel, sunflower and poppy seeds
- fizzy drinks, such as colas and beer

Try to avoid stressful situations and find ways to relax when you start to feel tense.

Treatments for trapped wind

There are a number of products which relieve trapped wind which you can buy from your pharmacy or supermarket. Ask for an anti-flatulent that contains simethicone. The active ingredient (simethicone) breaks down the tiny bubbles of gas that cause the bloated feeling and gurgling noises of trapped wind, forming fewer, larger bubbles which are more easily expelled or absorbed in the intestine.

Simethicone is non-systemic, which means it isn't absorbed into your blood stream, making it suitable to take even during pregnancy.

You should consult your doctor or pharmacist before using any remedies during pregnancy.

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