

## Reasons behind your bloat



**Feeling bloated and not sure why? There are some reasons why you feel stretched and uncomfortable that you may not even know about, which Robynne Chutkan M.D has divulged to Mind Body Green as part of her new book, *The Bloat Cure: 101 Natural Solutions for Real and Lasting Relief*.**

Caffeine is a culprit, as its diuretic effect (increasing passing of urine) may cause you to feel hydrated, triggering a slower movement of food through your intestines that leads to backups and bloating.

On top of this, caffeine is known to overstimulate the digestive system, which may result in bloat-causing spasms and side effects like stomach ulcers and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).

So while coffee or cola may help you flush out liquids, you may want to cut down or cut it out completely if you suffer from regular bloating! Go for caffeine-free options and cut down slowly to allow your body to adjust.

Cruciferous vegetables, like cabbage, kale, broccoli and cauliflower, along with beans, are all packed full of healthy elements such as fibre. However, there's also raffinose - a starch that your body struggles to break down and digest properly. Combine this with the bacteria in your colon; the raffinose is fermented to form methane, a chemical compound that transpires as bloating.

You don't need to stop eating these veggies completely, and there are ways to make eating them less painful. Lemon juice drizzled over the top will help stimulate the digestive enzymes, and you should always soak dried beans overnight before cooking them. Don't pile them up too high either as although they're good for you, too many will leave you feeling tight.

Keeping on the topic of food, a drunken meal at 11pm is no good for bloating as your stomach's muscular contractions are not as active at night as they are during the day. So after filling up on calories and carbohydrates and lying down, your body won't be able to use gravity to help transport things down south. Cue the bloat, and extra acid reflux.

The key to this is simple; eat your largest meal earlier in the day when your tummy is still active, then reduce to a smaller, lighter portion by dinnertime. A curfew will also help with snacking and stick to water after a certain time to help hydrate your body before bed.

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