

12 Natural Remedies To Treat Bloating & Prevent It In The First Place



If bloating only affected us when we were on our period, life would be much easier. But **bloating is a common complaint that affects women** across the board, no matter your age, size, or where you are in your menstrual cycle. Blame it on your physical makeup — no, really, you can put all the blame on biology. **A woman's colon, which is 10 centimeters longer than a man's**, is constantly competing for space with the bladder, uterus, ovaries, and fallopian tubes. Plus, in order to prepare us for pregnancy and subsequent extra water retention, our colons are more of a winding path with lots of unexpected turns. In layman's terms, we were born to bloat.

Luckily, there are certain things we can do that can prevent us from bloating so often. Bustle spoke with Robynne Chutkan, M.D., an integrative gastroenterologist, founder of the [Digestive Center for Women](#), and author of *The Bloat Cure: 101 Natural Solutions for Real and Lasting Relief*, who says the most basic lifestyle adjustments go a long way. If you want to prevent bloating during a particularly vulnerable time, like the week leading up to your period, she says, "Cut down on salt and heavy foods like dairy and meat and drink an extra 1-2 liters of water daily."

[CLICK HERE TO BUY THE BLOAT CURE: 101 NATURAL SOLUTIONS FOR REAL AND LASTING RELIEF](#)

Even if you're on top of your game, though, you're bound to face unexpected bloating at some point. No need to worry, because Dr. Chutkan says there are loads of [natural ways to take care of a swollen abdomen](#), indigestion, and gas. There are several foods you can eat (or avoid eating) and activities you can do, and they're all pretty simple. If you don't have any of the following products in your home already, you can easily get your hands on them at your local shops.

Here are 12 [natural remedies for bloating](#).

1. Consume Some Plant-Based Probiotics

If you and your swollen stomach are feeling blue, Dr. Chutkan recommends you reach for "live bacteria that can help address imbalance in the gut flora." Probiotics are your very own superheroes that [stop bad bacteria and yeast from accumulating](#) too much in your intestines, which [leads to bloating](#). The best probiotics contain [these strains of good microbes](#): *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, *Lactobacillus reuteri*, and *Saccharomyces boulardii*. Be sure to look on the label to see if any or all of them are inside the package.

Kimchi, sauerkraut, tempeh, and kombucha are always reliable options. Even better is that [these probiotics will assist you in pooping](#) with ease, which may be the primary cause of your uncomfortable bloating in the first place. Dr. Chutkan also says these foods

reduce gas production.

2. Chew On Fennel Seeds Or Drink Fennel Tea

You may not have fennel just lying around (unless you've been experimenting with fancy Jamie Oliver recipes), but it's an easy thing to scoop up at your nearest health food store or online. "Eat a pinch of fennel seeds at the end of a meal to benefit from its gas-reducing oils," Dr. Chutkan tells Bustle. This can be particularly helpful [if you've eaten your fair share of cruciferous vegetables](#), such as broccoli, and you can already feel the belly bloating a little bit, (something which is completely natural, by the way). It's also a nice way to wrap up a big plate of carby pasta.

For those of you who don't want to munch on fennel seeds like a chipmunk (though they are kind of delicious), you've got options. Dr. Chutkan says you can put crushed or whole seeds in a cup of boiling water and steep for 10 minutes before you sip on it. There's always the option of sprinkling them on top of your next meal, too.

3. Sip On Water With Freshly-Squeezed Lemon Juice

Lemon juice stimulates digestive enzymes and speeds up the process of whatever good is happening in your gut. Make yourself a glass of warm lemon [water if you've eaten a lot of salt recently](#); it can help flush out the extra sodium and reduce swelling in your face, hands, ankles, and abdomen. In fact, keeping hydrated in general is a good idea if you want to successfully fight bloating.

5. Avoid Eating Canned Beans

You might pat yourself on the back when you add chickpeas to your salad, thinking about how much protein you're giving your adult self. But that might come at a cost if those were canned chickpeas. Dr. Chutkan says [canned beans often contain hidden ingredients](#) that make your body swollen, even if you rinse them well before using them.

To counteract the bloating you may experience from those canned beans, the next time

you want to add beans to your meal, buy the dried variety from your grocery store and [soak those suckers overnight](#) so they are easier on your digestive system and less likely to make you swell up.

6. Drink Less Coffee

Ideally, drinking [no coffee would be the best solution](#), because coffee increases acid production and irritates your GI tract, two things that roll out the red carpet for bloating. But we live in the real world and, for many of us, kissing coffee goodbye simply isn't an option. Dr. Chutkan knows that, so if you don't want to swear it off completely, she says limiting yourself to one cup of coffee or less for the day can help with your bloating. "And try not to turn your coffee into a milkshake with lots of cream and sugar, which can themselves contribute to your bloat," she adds.

7. Eat Ginger Or Drink Ginger Tea

Ginger has been used for centuries to cure all kinds of basic ailments. Two compounds called gingerols and shogaols found in this root [reduce inflammation in your gut](#) and send a strong message to the muscles in your intestines to chill out. There are a few different ways to effectively get ginger in your system, but unfortunately, those sugary ginger chews aren't one of them.

Instead, cut a few very [thin slices of ginger and steep them](#) in boiling water for 10 minutes. You can add honey and a squeeze of lemon to make it tasty before you sip on it. You can even chew on little pieces of raw ginger for a quick fix, if you don't mind the taste. Powdered ginger root, which you can take daily as a supplement, is also an option.

8. Try Acupuncture

Rhiannon Griffiths, an acupuncturist and qualified [Co-active coach](#), told the *Guardian* that acupuncture is a treatment that can significantly help with [inflammation in your digestive tract, and the bloating](#) that happens as a result. She says this ancient Eastern treatment can "re-regulate the correct flow of energy in the body," which can help to

"settle down the stomach, help digestion and calm irritable bowel syndrome."

In order to reduce any swelling you may be experiencing from your diet, the usually-painless needles are placed in various places, like your arms, legs, abdomen, and feet. Acupuncture is an excellent solution for people who inexplicably battle bloating on a regular basis.

9. Cook Grains & Legumes With Kombu

It may sound like an ominous planet from the Star Trek series, but [kombu is an edible seaweed-like sea vegetable](#) from Japan that is used in Asian cuisines. Dr. Chutkan recommends you add a little bit of kombu to the pot when you cook your next batch of beans, lentils, or grains such as quinoa, since kombu contains an enzyme that makes it easier for your body to break down the foods that can be tough on your intestines. It'll definitely prevent future swelling, and it may even minimize an already-bloated stomach.

10. Do A Few Simple Yoga Moves

Not only does it ease muscular and joint pain, but yoga additionally offers relief when your digestive system is all tangled up. There are a few different postures you can do at home to [ease the bloating and reduce any pains](#) in your abdomen that might be occurring as a result.

Start with apanasana, which is basically lying on your back and hugging your knees into your chest. You can then take a supine twist by bringing your knees to one side and letting your head fall the opposite way. Downward facing dog and standing forward fold are simple but effective as well; they're easy inversions that [encourage blood flow to your lower half](#). Whichever postures you choose, hold them for a few minutes at a time to get maximum results.

11. Snack On A Banana

You could probably use some extra fiber in your life to get things moving if you're uncomfortably bloated. Ripe bananas are known to aid with digestion and bowel movements, and the potassium found in this fruit manages the fluid levels in your body that are causing the bloating. Don't eat more than one, though, because that could actually make you constipated, and then you'll have no fighting chance against that stubborn bloating.

12. Try Eliminating Dairy

Even though going gluten-free is all the rage these days, it's more likely you have a lactose intolerance than a gluten sensitivity. Lactose is the main sugar in milk, and in order for it to be properly processed in your body, you need have an enzyme called lactase. Infants have plenty of it because they need it to digest breastmilk, but as we get older, we produce less and less lactase because we don't need milk anymore.

This makes it extremely difficult for the digestive system to break down cow's milk and other dairy products the same way, which is what causes that bloated belly. This symptom only takes as little as 30 minutes to show up after you've downed some dairy — and it's way more common than you think. An estimated 98 percent of Southeast Asians, 90 percent of Asian-Americans, 74 percent of Native-Americans, 70 percent of African-Americans, and the majority of Jewish, Latino, and Indian people all suffer from lactose intolerance, so if you're feeling bloated all the time, you might consider cutting out dairy for six weeks and seeing how you feel. If you're lucky, your bloating might disappear altogether.

Images: Fotolia (8) ; Pexels (2)