

## MORNING THUNDER!....

... , pump, trump, farting, fluffing, breaking wind, passing wind, stepping on a toad, low-flying ducks, are all synonyms for lower bowel gas. In the middle ages, loudly breaking wind was an act of appreciation to the host/cook. Martin Luther is quoted as supposedly having said "*Warum rülpsset und furzet ihr nicht, hat es euch denn nicht geschmecket?*" ("Why don't you belch and fart, did you not enjoy the meal?"). This rule of behaviour is now seen as absolute rudeness/disgusting (although children find it hilarious) and gas should only be released after having stepped outside away from company. How many of you, when in a public loo, tap and bounce your legs like crazy, holding it in until someone at last uses the hand-dryer? As a certain amount gas is an act of nature and we all "let go" at some point, why should we be ridiculed and outcast if we "blow our own trumpet" and when should it be perceived as a problem?

***What is it?***- Lower bowel gas is a physiologic excretory process and our gut normally contains 100 - 200mL of gas. An average person eating a "normal" diet will emit approximately 1 litre per day, passing gas approximately 14 times per day (of course this will vary from one person to another), no arguing now! The emitted gas originates in our colon and is made up mostly of Hydrogen, carbon dioxide, methane and swallowed nitrogen (don't stand too close to that birthday cake!)

***What causes it?*** - There are many causes of gas:-

- \*Drinking fluids with meals
- \*Eating too quickly (the stomach has no teeth, therefore food must be prepared properly in the mouth)
- \*Overeating
- \*Improper food combinations
- \*Carbonated drinks
- \*Smoking
- \*Accumulation of waste in the system (slow transit, constipation)
- \* Lactose intolerance
- \*Allergies
- \*Candida
- \*Insufficient Exercise
- \*Insufficient digestive secretions
- \*Stress
- \*Chewing Gum (you may as well go to the local garage and put the air line in your mouth!)

***When does it become a problem?*** - Usually when we wake up our abdomen is flat and progressively distends throughout the day. When this distension is consistently painful and uncomfortable we should take notice. The intestines will register pain from gas before pain from inflammation, adhesion or ulceration. This is probably our body's way of saying "pay attention to gas pain, understand it and deal with it properly". Our gut may distend and feel full making us uncomfortable enough to loosen our clothing, giving us a feeling of being a few months pregnant!

So, "bloated" guys, at last you know a tiny fraction of what pregnancy can feel like!

***What can help relieve it?*** - \*Massage the abdomen (peppermint oil is very soothing), \*Take a hot bath \*Practice breathing exercises \*Abstain from eating when in pain \*Have colon hydrotherapy treatments \*Avoid Lettuce, sweet corn, raw onion, cauliflower. It is a good idea to have some of the following in your kitchen:- Caraway, Cardamom, Celery (especially juiced), Dill, Fennel, Garlic and Thyme - all will help in the relief of gas.

How many of us have apologised to our Spouse as we have "let go" in the car on the way home from a dinner party saying "O'hhhh So sorry, but I've been in pain for ages and I just had to do it!" When we relax and let go, the bloating doesn't go but the pain is better. By holding it in all day, it will be released as soon as we relax going off to sleep! It's as well to remember that whilst on your long haul flight or overnight coach journey - if you have been holding it in all day and you are sat next to a stranger, best stay awake! A lovely lady was sat next to her husband during a church service, when she leaned over to him and whispered, "I have just let off a quiet fart, what should I do", he replied "Best buy some new batteries for your hearing aid!"

"What a horrible subject to talk about" I hear many people say but, it is a necessary subject for those who are suffering and don't know how to deal with it. Bowel behaviour is a subject I talk about everyday - by keeping your bowel clean and functioning properly, you will not only feel great, you will be able to relax and sleep soundly, especially on those long trips, knowing you won't upset your neighbour!

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