

No bloating about bloating

Feeling bloated today? You're not alone.

It's not uncommon to get the sensation caused by gas, air or fluid retention in the stomach or small intestine. But what's important to know: bloating has many causes, says [Aminat Ogun, MD](#), an OSF HealthCare family medicine physician. So don't let it linger and hope it will go away. If symptoms persist, see a health care provider so they can rule out something more serious and give proper treatment.

"It might feel like your stomach is full, swollen or sometimes tender. It can cause some discomfort," Dr. Ogun says.

Causes for bloating include:

- The body makes too much gas.
- An overgrowth of intestinal bacteria. H. pylori is a common type. Dr. Ogun says it causes chronic inflammation in the stomach lining, and it can lead to peptic ulcers or even stomach cancer if untreated.
- Diet issues, like intolerance of certain carbohydrates or a gluten intolerance.
- Hormone changes during a woman's menstrual cycle.
- Abnormal gastrointestinal motility. Simply put, this is when your gut is not working properly. Dr. Ogun says one example is gastroparesis.

"The body takes its time before its able to pass food from the stomach to the small intestine," she explains.

- Stress, anxiety and depression.

Dr. Ogun points out that we can't control some of those causes, but others we can. She says a typical first step for a person with bloating is to change their diet. She says doctors may recommend a diet with a long name: fermentable oligosaccharides, disaccharides, monosaccharides and polyols. But just remember the abbreviation: FODMAP. It describes carbohydrates that are difficult for the body to break down.

Foods to avoid on the FODMAP diet: pasta, cereal, bread, yogurt, ice cream, apples, cherries and peaches. Alternatives include quinoa, brown rice, eggs, cheese, grapes, strawberries, chamomile tea, peppermint tea and ginger tea.

"Have a food diary," Dr. Ogun suggests. "See what triggers your bloating symptoms and see if you can eliminate those foods."

People with bloating may also take medicine like Gas-X. If you have intestinal bacteria, you'll be on antibiotic medication.

Dr. Ogun adds for people age 55 and up, bloating is less common, and other health issues are, simply due to older age. So, if you are of that age and have sudden bloating symptoms, see a provider to find out if your symptoms are bloating or something more serious. And for all ages, if you have severe diarrhea, nausea, vomiting or unintentional weight loss, stop by a doctor's office.