

Why do I feel like I have gas or bloating after moving to a vegan diet?

Dr. Greger of Nutritionfacts. Org: “intestinal gas is normal and healthy.” “Long-term, most people bulking up on high-fiber foods do not appear to have significantly increased problems with gas. In the beginning, though, “A little bit of extra flatulence,” reads the *Harvard Health Letter*, “could be an indication that you’re eating the way you should!”

<https://nutritionfacts.org/blog/beans-and-gas-clearing-the-air/>

See also video: <https://nutritionfacts.org/video/how-to-cultivate-a-healthy-gut-microbiome-with-food/>

Bloating, gas, and some stomach pain when you start eating more plant-based foods is common. Why? The average American gets only 13 grams of fiber a day, while the recommendations are 25 g/day for women and 35 grams/day for men, yet humans do not get near that amount until they are vegan! Since fiber isn't digested, it's going to impact the entire digestive system until it adjusts. But don't worry, this healthy change will come!

Meanwhile, incorporate some of these tips:

- Chew your food thoroughly! Aim for 10 seconds per mouthful. It'll feel strange at first, but it's crucially important as the digestion process starts in your mouth. Use your teeth to help your intestines.
- Eat slowly. Try waiting 5 seconds before your next bite. This is harder than the first tip, but once you incorporate it you'll realize how fast you've been eating. If you love eating, slow down and enjoy it.
- Cooked veggies are easier to digest than raw. Even if doing a salad, consider lightly steaming the vegetables and massaging the kale (if your not sure what this is, google ‘massaged kale’ to see how easy it is).
- Start with smaller legumes like lentils and split peas. They are easier to digest and also faster to cook. From there go to black beans and similar size beans. Consider mashing them if it works in the recipe or meal. Chickpeas can be the most difficult-you might be swallowing some of them whole.
- Eat smaller portions to start but eat beans and high fiber foods daily to tell the gut to manufacture the bacteria needed to break down those beans and veggies.
- Don't hesitate to use more so-called processed foods. Sure brown rice and 100% whole wheat bread are better, but this is a lifelong journey and maybe to eat more beans and veggies now and white rice or white bread until better adjusted.
- Be mindful of seitan (aka wheat meat or gluten). It can be difficult to digest for some. Try eating smaller pieces, and again, chew thoroughly!

Think of eating healthy as learning a new skill. The learning, shopping, finding recipes, prepping and eating slower; it's new to you the same way if you were starting pottery or carpentry. It's going to take some time to learn. And there are going to be mistakes! Meals you don't like. Some wasted food and money even. But that's always an issue with making changes and what's important is you keep improving and figure out what works for you.