

Foods That Can Help Bloating

Gentle, nourishing choices to support digestion without creating another list of food rules

When bloating is uncomfortable, it is natural to look for a food that will make it disappear. There is no single food that reliably treats bloating for everyone, because the cause matters. Constipation, swallowed air, changes in fibre, IBS, food intolerance, meal size and other digestive conditions can all contribute. The most helpful approach is usually to support digestion while noticing your own pattern rather than expecting one 'gut health' food to fix everything.

Oats and soluble fibre

Oats contain soluble fibre, which can help support regular bowel function. For someone whose bloating is linked with constipation, gradually increasing tolerated fibre alongside enough fluid may be useful. But a sudden jump in fibre can itself increase wind and bloating, so more is not automatically better. Start with an amount that feels manageable and change slowly.

Bananas and other tolerated fruit

Fruit can contribute fibre, fluid and nutrients, but tolerance varies. A banana may be an easy, predictable option for one person and unsuitable for another. Ripeness, portion size and individual digestive sensitivity can change how a food feels. The useful question is not 'Is this a good food?' but 'Is this a food my body and sensory system can manage?'

Ginger

Ginger is commonly used for nausea and digestive discomfort. Some people find ginger tea or ginger in food soothing, but it should not be presented as a cure for unexplained bloating. If you use medicines, have significant reflux or are considering concentrated supplements, check suitability with a pharmacist or clinician.

Foods that support regular bowel movements

If constipation is part of the problem, regular meals, tolerated fibre and adequate fluid may help. Whole grains, fruit, vegetables, pulses, nuts and seeds are common fibre sources, but nobody needs to eat every item on that list. Choose from foods you can safely and comfortably eat. Increasing fibre without enough fluid, or increasing it too quickly, may make symptoms worse.

What about yoghurt and fermented foods?

Fermented foods are often promoted for 'gut health', but they are not essential and they do not suit everyone. Some yoghurts can be useful sources of protein and calcium, while lactose may cause symptoms in people with lactose intolerance. If fermented foods are sensory-safe and well tolerated, they can simply be part of the diet; if they are not, you do not need to force them.

ARFID and sensory-safe foods matter

If you have ARFID, an eating disorder or sensory-based eating difficulties, protecting reliable safe foods is more important than chasing an idealised gut-health diet. A limited food that you can consistently eat has nutritional value because it is actually reaching your body. Changes should add safety and nourishment where possible rather than removing the foods keeping you fed.

Building a Calmer Eating Pattern

Regularity can matter as much as individual foods

Long gaps without eating can leave some people extremely hungry, making a much larger meal more likely later. Large meals can create fullness and pressure even without an intolerance. Smaller or more regular eating opportunities may feel gentler for some people, but the right pattern depends on your appetite, routine, health and sensory needs.

A simple 'what helps me?' check-in

Food: Which meals usually feel comfortable and predictable?

Fibre: Have I increased it suddenly, or am I getting very little?

Fluid: Am I drinking regularly enough for my bowel pattern?

Constipation: Am I opening my bowels less often or straining?

Portion: Does quantity change the symptom?

Context: Was I rushing, anxious, exhausted or eating after a very long gap?

Foods do not have to be fashionable to be useful

A plain breakfast, a familiar sandwich, a tolerated soup or another predictable meal may support you better than a bowl full of ingredients you dislike or cannot tolerate. Nutrition advice should work in the real world. Texture, smell, preparation, cost, executive function and availability all influence whether a food is genuinely accessible.

Be cautious with elimination

If a food repeatedly appears to trigger symptoms, record the pattern and discuss it with a GP or registered dietitian before removing several food groups. If coeliac disease is being considered, do not start a gluten-free diet before medical testing unless a clinician advises otherwise, because avoiding gluten can affect the accuracy of tests.

When food changes are not enough

Regular or persistent bloating deserves medical assessment, especially when it is new, worsening or accompanied by unexplained weight loss, blood in the stool, a persistent change in bowel habit, repeated vomiting, difficulty swallowing, a lump or swelling, or significant abdominal pain. Sudden severe abdominal pain, vomiting blood or severe breathing difficulty needs urgent medical help.

A message from Space to Breathe Therapy

Food does not need to become a treatment plan at every meal. If your stomach is uncomfortable, begin with foods that are safe and manageable, make changes slowly and notice what your own body tells you. Supporting digestion is not about achieving the most impressive diet; it is about enough nourishment, a bowel pattern that is as comfortable as possible and getting the right help when symptoms persist.

You are allowed to choose simplicity. A food can be useful because it is predictable, affordable, sensory-safe and something you can actually eat. That matters just as much as the latest advice about what a healthy gut is supposed to look like.

Further information: NHS guidance on bloating, constipation, fibre and IBS; NICE guidance relevant to IBS and coeliac disease. This resource is educational and does not replace individual medical or dietetic assessment.