

## Beat summer bloat

You're eating light, fresh foods, which is good. But they can do a number on your stomach. Here's how to flatten it fast.

By JUNO DeMELO

All those salads, crudité, and fruits that you're practically living on at this time of year tend to be low-cal and nutrient-packed, yes, but they can be hard for your body to digest. And when your system is struggling, it sends an SOS in the form of bloat. Not fun in swimsuit (or any) season. Deflate, and stay flatter, with these six strategies.

### Feed your gut

Your daily yogurt is already helping in the battle of the bulge because it promotes the growth of good-for-you bacteria in your belly. (If



Makeup by Eric Vosburg/ABTP.com; manicure by Isadora Rios/ABTP.com

you don't have a yogurt habit, start one.) Now amp up the benefits by giving those bugs the food they need to thrive. "Prebiotics are like Miracle-Gro for your good gut flora, providing them with the type of fiber that they feed on," says Kathie Swift, R.D.N., the author of *The Swift Diet: 4 Weeks to Mend the Belly, Lose the Weight and Get Rid of Bloat*. Work asparagus, artichokes, and bananas—all high in prebiotics—into your diet as well.

#### **Get things moving**

A summer getaway means not only an escape from the daily grind but also a departure from your usual habits, and an unfortunate side effect of that schedule change-up is constipation. The good news: You can combat it with just 10 minutes of cardio. "Aerobic activity increases blood flow to your GI tract, which helps move food more quickly through your system," explains Felice Schnoll-Sussman, M.D., the director of the Jay Monahan Center for Gastrointestinal Health at New York–Presbyterian Weill Cornell Medical College. Take a barefoot run on the beach, go for a swim in the hotel pool, or just do some jumping jacks.

#### **Grill your vegetables**

Or steam or stir-fry them. If you're not used to eating a lot of raw veggies, your system can have trouble digesting the fiber they contain, leading to belly-expanding gas. "Cooking loosens up the cell walls of plants, increasing their digestibility," Swift says. If it's just too hot to cook, toss together lettuce, tomatoes, and cucumbers, but steer clear of raw cruciferous vegetables, as they're some of the worst offenders. Can't imagine a summer without

kale salad and cabbage slaws? Make them easier to digest by taking a supplement that has the enzymes that break down their sugars and fiber (such as Enzymedica Digest Gold).

#### **Eat your fruit with a fork**

Many of the fruits you eat out of hand—like apples, peaches, pears, and plums—contain a type of carb that creates gas and pulls water into your intestinal tract, making your bloating worse, says Katie Cavuto, R.D.N., a nutritionist in Philadelphia. Melon, pineapple, and strawberries are easier on your system.

#### **Roll out your yoga mat**

Certain poses put pressure on your colon in ways that keep things moving along, helping to eliminate gases from the intestine, Schnoll-Sussman says: For a wind-relieving pose, lie on your back, wrap your arms around your right knee, and gently pull it toward your chest; repeat on the left side and then with both legs together. Next, get into a half plow by lying on your back and raising both legs until they're perpendicular to the ground. Hold each of the poses for four to eight deep breaths, doing them whenever you feel bloated or daily as a preventive measure.

#### **Go natural**

Eating less sugar is smart and a great way to slim down. But don't turn to diet drinks and sugar-free protein bars, which are often sweetened with gas-inducing sugar alcohols such as sorbitol or maltitol. Instead, go the natural route with flavored flat water and fruit-and-nut bars. ★

Melon,  
pine-  
apple,  
and  
straw-  
berries  
are easier  
on your  
system  
than  
peaches  
and  
plums.



## **INDULGE WITHOUT THE BULGE**

You know some favorite foods make you puffy, but it just wouldn't feel like summer without them. With our smart swaps, you won't have to deprive yourself.

### **ICE CREAM**

Lactose, a sugar in milk that quite a few people have trouble digesting, is the culprit here. And unlike yogurt, ice cream has no probiotics to help balance it out. Try coconut- and cashew-milk ice creams instead. They taste creamy and indulgent but are dairy-free.

### **BEER**

Those bubbles push out your stomach, so go for wine. (And stick with still, not sparkling—remember, the bubbles.)

### **TURKEY BURGERS**

One of these with the works can pack about 1,200 milligrams of sodium. Add some fries or potato chips to your plate and you've got yourself a serious salt situation, which prompts your body to retain water, making belly bloat even worse. Leave off the cheese and salty sauces (like barbecue, steak, or teriyaki). Then wash the burger down with watermelon or coconut water, which are both packed with sodium-balancing potassium.