



## *Question:*

---

How can I decrease bloating from radiation treatment?

## *Answer:*

---

Bloating is a very common side effect of radiation to the abdominal region. There is not a lot of evidence based advice, but modifying the diet may relieve some of the bloating. Each person's response is different.

Choosing a low fiber diet and omitting 'gas producing' foods is the first thing to try. These would include beans, peas, corn, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower and green leafy vegetables. Unfortunately, these are also the foods that we know can promote good health. However, temporarily omitting these foods may help with your symptoms. You can start adding these foods back into your diet once you feel like the bloating is manageable. When adding fiber back into the diet, try one small serving every day or every other day.

Other suggested strategies for reducing bloating include:

- Avoid carbonated beverages
- Not talking while eating (which causes more air swallowing)
- Avoid the use of straws (also causes more air swallowing)
- Avoid dairy (some people get temporary lactose intolerance)

### **Digestive Aids**

There are a few supplements and natural foods that may help your digestive system. While data is limited for the following suggestions, they are unlikely to cause harm. You will want to discuss the potential use with your health care providers.

- Glutamine sometimes helps to improve digestive functioning and alleviates gas.

- Digestive enzymes may help your situation. These require a prescription and you take them with meals.
- Supplemental, food derived enzymes may help. Bromelain is one that has some evidence for digestive health. (1)
- Adding in other herbs may help, such as fennel, ginger, and peppermint (if you don't have gastro-esophageal reflux disorder). They come in tea or capsule form.
- Papaya may also aid in digestion.
- Yogurt can help reduce gut bacteria which can cause gas and stimulate the production of good bacteria.
- Remember that over-the-counter supplements are not regulated in the US, so be sure to get a recommendation from your doctor, dietitian or pharmacist on what brand and dose schedule is suggested.

Lastly, we recommend seeking the professional expertise of a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RD or RDN) in your location, either in the outpatient department of your local cancer center or in private practice, to help you with this transition back to full recovery. You may have other nutritional needs that should be taken into account as you recover from this serious illness. You can find a dietitian by typing in your zip code [here](#).

***The original question and answer were generously donated by Diana Dyer, MS, RD a cancer survivor, registered dietitian, organic garlic farmer, and the author of "A Dietitian's Cancer Story: Information & Inspiration for Recovery & Healing from a 3-time Cancer Survivor.***

Question and Answer updated and revised by Melissa Strohl, MS, RD, CSO, LDN, CNSC on behalf of ON DPG

### ***References, Websites, and Resources:***

---

1. Pavan R, Jain S, Shraddha, Kumar A. Properties and therapeutic application of bromelain: A review. Biotechnol Res Int. 2012; 2012: 976203. Epub 2012 Dec 10.

Updated November 2018