



Here is how to have a flatter stomach and reduce the dreaded bloating. **NALISHA PATEL** starts you on the way to a leaner belly.

Who doesn't want a slightly flatter stomach which they can feel happy with?

Well, we all know how important it is to eat right and exercise. That part is no secret. We know this is needed if we truly want to create a lean stomach as well as a healthy body. This article is not on how to exercise or eat right to reduce fat around your stomach, but rather to share with you some tips to feel less bloated around the tum. But yes, you must start eating right and working out too!

CUT BACK SALT AND INCREASE WATER INTAKE

Avoid salt and highly processed foods as the more sodium you eat, the more you will retain water, which adds to feeling bloated and can even make you look puffy in the face (remember how you look after a dinner of instant noodles or pizza!).

Goodbye to belly BLOATING

It can also contribute to a higher weight on the scales as you retain this extra water weight.

To compensate for this, consume more water on a regular basis throughout the day and start cutting back on high sodium filled foods.

GULPING AIR

Eating too quickly, gulping down drinks and chewing gum are some of the things that can contribute to a bloated stomach. Make sure you eat in a relaxed environment, eat mindfully and chew your food thoroughly before swallowing. Avoid sipping drinks through straws, choosing instead to sip from a glass or a small mouthed sipper bottle.

These simple techniques will help reduce bloating. It really is the little things that add up.

STRESS

Have you ever had a really important (but stress causing) event coming up where you were really nervous? Did your stomach literally ache from nervousness and you may have had to rush to the loo from all your nerves? Well, when you are stressed out cortisol is released (a stress hormone) and this can cause your bowels to start contracting which leads to bloating.

Then the vicious cycle begins: you feel stressed, you crave comfort foods (high fatty and processed foods), get more bloated, create more stress and so on!

Look at various ways you can manage your stress levels, such as exercising, getting

regular massages, reframing how you look at stress inducing situations and working on reducing stress-related eating.

CUT BACK ON FRUIT (yes, you read correctly)

You have know that people can be lactose intolerant, but some people are also fructose (sugar enzyme that is present in all fruits) intolerant. If you regularly consume a lot of fruit, then you may experience gassiness and bloating after eating. Monitor your intake and see if it affects your tum (and bowels!).

LACTOSE-INTOLERANT

Some people notice that they have more abdominal discomfort after consuming dairy foods. They have trouble digesting the milk sugar "lactose" as they do not make enough of an enzyme (lactase) that is needed to break down lactose. Lactose not broken down gets passed to the colon where it turns into uncomfortable gas.

If you find that eating or consuming dairy makes you uncomfortable, try switching to an alternative like Soy or keeping a diary to monitor your reactions and taking the necessary steps to reduce your dairy consumption.

MOVE YOUR BODY

To have a healthy body, you need to move it. This is no surprise, but you might not know that you should move your body regularly to combat constipation which is a big contributor to the dreaded belly bloat.

Start exercising (walking is fine) for a

minimum of 30 to 35 minutes at least three to four times per week. Ideally you want to take a leisurely stroll each night after dinner for 20 minutes at least. This will help your digestion which will move your food through your digestive tract, making it function better.

GAS CAUSING FOODS

Yes, we all know that baked beans cause us to be a bit gassy, but some other everyday foods can also contribute. Certain foods produce more gas than others and people vary to the degree in which they can tolerate the foods. Some common everyday foods that can cause gas are legumes, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, onions, citrus foods, eggs and fatty foods.

Also when you start to increase your intake of fibre you may find you are more bloated and a bit more gassy than usual. Persevere and it will soon subside. Increase your water intake and keep up the increased fibre.

If you find that you have tried some of the above tips and have not much success on reducing your bloated feeling, contact your GP for a quick chat.

▲ For Nalisha Patel's free e-book: *49 Tips to Shaping up & Slimming Down*, see www.healthmastery.co.nz

Fitness model, facing page: Rosa-Maria Romero. Photographer: Julio Arenas.



Power of **BEE** POLLEN

Bee pollen is the secret regenerative power behind elite athletes who can increase their stamina by up to 25 per cent, says

DR IGOR BORISOV.

It is also an effective and legal supplement for bodybuilders, with 50 per cent more muscle-building substances than meat.

Most people know about bee honey and eat it as food and like it as a very effective natural energizer. But honey is not the only bee product.

When bees fly around they collect plant nectar and also pollen. In a day worker bees can gather up to 50,000 or more pollen grains.

Bee pollen is mentioned in the Bible and Koran, and was used as dietary supplement for thousands of years in China, Egypt, Greece and Ancient Rome. It is common knowledge that ancient Olympians consumed bee pollen as a nutritional food source to enhance their stamina and energy levels.

Nutrition value of bee pollen is very broad, so are its benefits. Bee pollen contains more than 96 different nutrients including protein (21.2 per cent), 11 carbohydrates (48.5 per cent), 24 fatty acids (9.9 per cent), ash (3.5 per cent), fiber (14.2 per cent) and also 16 vitamins, 28 minerals, and a lot of enzymes. Bee pollen's energy value by itself is not high. For example, one tablespoon of bee pollen contains just 45 calories of energy. However, bee pollen nutrients do more than just provide calories to burn as fuel. Bee pollen is a powerful "super-food" that can solve many health problems in your body.