

Health Check: The ins and outs of burping and farting

16 June 2014, by Terry Bolin



About 40% of people produce smelly gas because of a certain bacteria in their bowels. Credit: HyoJung Kim, CC BY-NC

The number of times someone passes gas varies with the time of day; some pass more in the mornings and others more in the evening. But it largely depends on the sensitivity of the nervous system in the your [rectum](#). If you have an increased sensitivity, perhaps because of a condition such as [irritable bowel syndrome](#), you may fart more often.

Most of the gas your body produces has no aroma, although about 40% of the population has the capacity to produce smelly hydrogen sulphide gas from the left side of the bowel because they carry a particular bacteria.

Smelly farts are of no great medical significance except in somebody with

To understand why we fart, you need to know something about the volume of gases produced in the bowels first.

Imagine how much space 25 litres of gas would occupy – about one third of the interior of a small car. That's how much gas you produce every day in your [intestines](#). So it's little wonder that farting, bloating and burping are relatively common.

Much of this gas production is recycled – by re-absorption and use within the [gut](#), particularly by the almost two kilograms of bacteria in your colon. Indeed, almost 22.5 litres is absorbed by the gut, used by gut bacteria or expires through the lungs.

Passing what remains

The remaining two and a half litres is what you pass through your bowels every day. [On average](#), men fart 12 times a day while women fart seven times – in portions of 30 to 120 millilitres. The total is the equivalent of a blown-up party balloon.

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