



## Air Swallowing

### What is Air Swallowing?

Air swallowing means taking in more air into your digestive system than your body needs. This extra air can make you feel:

- Bloating
- Uncomfortable
- Gassy or full of burps

There are a few types:

- **Supra-gastric belching**  
You quickly pull air into your throat and push it back out unconsciously. This can cause loud or repeated burping.
- **Aerophagia**  
You swallow lots of air without realising it, which can cause bloating and tummy discomfort.
- **Gastric belching**  
This is normal burping, air comes up from your stomach.

Air swallowing can make reflux worse and can feel embarrassing or uncomfortable.

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### Why does this happen?

Many people swallow air without noticing. It can happen because of:

1. **Stress or anxiety** – When you're tense, you may gulp air or swallow more often.
  2. **Eating too fast** – Talking while eating, rushing meals, sipping through straws, chewing gum, and drinking fizzy drinks all make you swallow extra air.
  3. **Stomach or gut problems** – Some conditions make air swallowing more likely.
  4. **Mouth breathing** – If your nose is blocked or you're used to breathing through your mouth, you take in more air.
  5. **Lifestyle habits** – Smoking, vaping, or using cannabis can make symptoms worse.
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### What can help?

The **best** things to help reduce air swallowing are:

- **Breathing exercises**, especially diaphragmatic (belly) breathing
- **Changing everyday habits** that bring extra air into your stomach
- **Reducing your stress**, stress and anxiety make these symptoms worse

## Diaphragmatic (Belly) Breathing – Your Main Tool

Diaphragmatic breathing helps your body relax and reduces swallowing extra air. It also:

- Reduces bloating and burping
- Helps your stomach digest food more comfortably
- Reduces reflux and discomfort
- Calms anxiety, which often makes symptoms worse

### How to Do Diaphragmatic Breathing

1. Sit or lie down comfortably.
2. Put one hand on your tummy and one on your chest.
3. Breathe in slowly through your nose, letting your tummy rise more than your chest.
4. Breathe out slowly through pursed lips (like blowing through a straw).
5. Repeat for a few minutes, focusing on slow, controlled breaths.

**💡 Practice daily: Try 5–10 minutes, especially before meals, after meals, or when you notice bloating or burping.**

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### Lifestyle Tips to Reduce Symptoms

These small changes can make a big difference:

- **Avoid straws** – They pull in extra air.
- **Don't chew gum** – You swallow air without noticing.
- **Eat slowly** – Put your fork down between bites if it helps.
- **Eat smaller, more frequent meals** – Easier on your stomach.
- **Stay upright after eating** – Don't lie down straight away.
- **Avoid fizzy drinks** – They increase gas and burping.
- **Keep active** – Movement helps digestion.
- **Look after your mental health** – Stress makes symptoms worse. Things like mindfulness, yoga, talking therapy or breathing exercises can help.