

## Borborygmus

### WHAT IS BORBORYGMUS?

Borborygmus is the name for the noise emitted by the intestines or stomach during digestion. It is more commonly known as **rumbling**. The sounds come from gas passing through the digestive tract. These gases can be squeezed by spasms and blocked in the gaps of the intestines. This sometimes causes noises.

### WHAT ARE THE CAUSES?

Rumbling can be caused by **air swallowed** during a meal, or by gas produced during the breakdown of **gas-generating food**. Gas-generating food is likely to produce more gas than other kinds of food. Cabbage, lentils and fizzy drinks are examples of this kind of food.

Some diseases can also be the source of rumbling. One example is **colonopathy**, which affects the colon and may cause rumbling and digestive problems such as abdominal pain, diarrhoea or constipation. Another potential cause is a **viral infection** such as gastroenteritis.

### DOES HUNGER TRIGGER RUMBLING?

You have probably heard your stomach rumble when you were hungry. Which leads to the question, does hunger trigger rumbling? In some ways it does, because we think about food when we are hungry and just by thinking about food, the digestive tract prepares itself for digestion. The digestive glands are stimulated and we start salivating. The intestines empty out to make room for the incoming food. They empty through peristalsis, which are contractions of the digestive tract. These contractions are rarely heard when the intestines are full, but can be heard more often when they are empty. This explains why your stomach rumbles when you are hungry.

## Borborygmus

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What do we call the noise the intestines or the stomach makes during digestion?

- Splashing
- Babbling
- Borborygmus

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Which of the following does not describe borborygmus?

- Rumbling
- Gargoyle
- Gurgling

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What causes gurgling noises in the digestive tract?

- Intestinal wind
- Fluid
- Food

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Which of the following produces the least intestinal wind in the digestive tract?

- Sweets
- Lentils
- Cabbage

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Gastroenteritis is...

- an autoimmune disease
- a viral infection
- a lung disease

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Gurgling noises are not a sign of being hungry.

- True
- False

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As the intestines empty, this can cause gurgling.

- False
- True

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Our salivary glands only produce saliva when we see food.

- False
- True

## Answers

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What do we call the noise the intestines or the stomach makes during digestion?

**Splashing**

*Wrong! Nice try, though.*

**Babbling**

*Wrong! Try again!*

**Borborygmus**

*Well done! That's right!*

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Which of the following does not describe borborygmus?

**Rumbling**

*Wrong! Borborygmus is the word used to describe the rumbling noises in your stomach.*

**Gargoyle**

*Well done! A gargoyle is something else entirely.*

**Gurgling**

*Wrong! Borborygmus is the word used to describe the gurgling noises in your stomach.*

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What causes gurgling noises in the digestive tract?

**Intestinal wind**

*Well done! That's the right answer.*

**Fluid**

*Wrong! Nice try, though.*

**Food**

*Wrong! Try again!*

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Which of the following produces the least intestinal wind in the digestive tract?

**Sweets**

*Well done! That's right!*

**Lentils**

*Wrong! When lentils are broken down in your digestive system, they produce a lot of wind.*

**Cabbage**

*Wrong! When cabbage is broken down in your digestive system, it produces a lot of wind.*

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Gastroenteritis is...

**an autoimmune disease**

*Wrong! Try again!*

**a viral infection**

*Well done! In most cases, gastroenteritis is caused by a virus, but it can also be caused by bacteria.*

**a lung disease**

*Wrong! That's not the correct answer.*

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Gurgling noises are not a sign of being hungry.

**True**

*Wrong! Think about the noises your stomach makes when you are hungry!*

**False**

*Well done! That's right! When you are hungry, your digestive tract gets ready to digest food and you may hear your stomach making noises.*

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As the intestines empty, this can cause gurgling.

**False**

*Wrong! Try again!*

**True**

*Well done! That's right! Your intestines contract as they empty and this produces noises.*

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Our salivary glands only produce saliva when we see food.

**False**

*Well done! You do not necessarily have to see food, as even just thinking about food can cause your salivary glands to produce saliva.*

**True**

*Wrong! Notice what happens when you think of a deliciously refreshing ice cream!*

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