

*THE*  
**BIG BOOK OF**  
**GROSS**  
**STUFF**

**BART KING**

*Author of The Big Book of Boy Stuff*

# The Big Book of Gross Stuff

Bart King



**GIBBS SMITH**

TO ENRICH AND INSPIRE HUMANKIND

The Big Book of Gross Stuff

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*This book is dedicated to your digestive mucus.  
(After all, no one ever gives it a proper "thank-you"!)*

# The Big Book of Gross Stuff

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# A Note on the Writing of this Book

This book really IS about gross stuff. And that's a tricky subject! Because when it comes to grossness, there is an invisible line between "hilariously funny" and "going too far." And just to make things interesting, that invisible line is different from person to person.

This means that this book is almost guaranteed to make you laugh *and* to actually gross you out. But, hey, don't chicken out now! After all, I had to be brave just to write all this stuff. You see, as this book's author, I face a unique danger. People might link ME with the disgusting things I'm writing about!

Not wanting to be contaminated in this way, I've taken special steps to ensure that I myself am *in no way gross*. So during the writing of this book, I stopped manufacturing:

- mucus
- dandruff
- tweets from my Twitter

Furthermore, I showered twice daily. This process included exfoliation, defoliation, and deforestation. (Plus, I scrubbed between my toes!)

Finally, before sitting down to write, I looked at pictures of kittens, flowers, and puppies. This helped

purify and protect my mind from the horrible topics that my cruel editor forced me to research.

As you can see, I have sacrificed a lot for this book, but as long as you do not associate me with grossness, it will have been worth it. And please don't link the following people with gross stuff either, even though they did help with this book: Lynn King, Matt Grow, MD, Parker Swanson, Virginia and Dallas Wassink, Michael Milone, the Groh family, Jeff Holiman, Chuck Shepherd, Carolyn Wood, Nancy Tipton, MD, Taewon and Philip Laplante, Jennifer C. Felton, MD, Robert Rowzee, Andrew R. Brown, MD, Michelle Herrmann, Robert Wilkes, Mary McLean, Annemarie Plaizier, Destiny Covington-Zawasky, Jennifer Blair, Kathleen Twomey, Tama Filipas, Dean Hanson, Lorraine Roosevelt, Don Sisler, Katy Killilea, Robin Henderson Thomas, Katie Greenseth, Dee Roosevelt, Christine Mathews, Tiffany Denman, Dave Sohigian, Debbie Alvarez, Jared Smith, Madge Baird, and Suzanne Taylor.

Well, as you're about to find out, it's a gross, gross world out there. Let's learn all about it!

# What Makes It Gross?

"Dude, that's gross."

I bet you have heard someone say this recently. No? Then read this! A man from Belgium named Wim Delvoye made a machine out of thirty-three feet of laboratory tubes, along with various containers and gauges. The machine has a hole at both ends. To activate it, a cook "feeds" a meal into one end, and the big machine starts grinding up the food and moving it along.

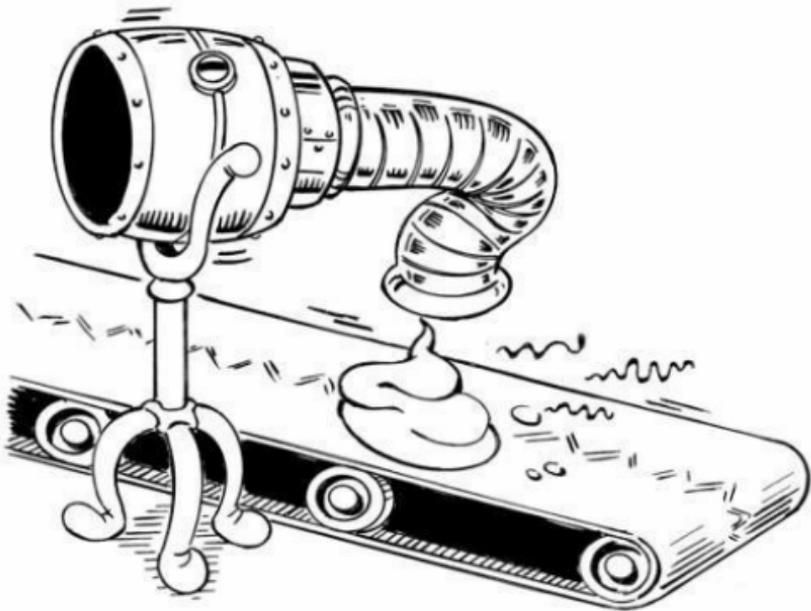
Spectators then watch as the food makes stops at six vats of acids and enzymes. Finally, it works its way to the end of the process, where it comes out in a brown log.

And that's when everyone starts taking lots of photos.

Yep, it's a mechanical digestive system! But can you explain to me why people would stare in fascination at a machine that does the **EXACT SAME THING** that they can do?

## **Because it's gross!**

No one ever says so, but gross stuff is sort of magical. Nasty things are like magnets that repel and attract us at the same time. Once our disgust is activated, we get a strong feeling of revulsion; we might start breathing through our mouth or look away from the gross thing in question. But at the same time, we can't help sneaking a glance (or a sniff) to see if that nasty thing is still oozing, stinking, or pulsating. (Yeah, pulsating is good!)



## Spot the Pattern!

Did you know that "nastify" (to make nasty) is an actual word? Neither did I! See if you can spot what all these words have in common! (Besides being gross, I mean.)

clammy  
dank  
filmy  
gloppy  
gooey  
greasy  
gummy  
icky  
moist  
mucilaginous  
mucky

oozy  
scummy  
slimy  
slippery  
squishy  
sticky  
tacky  
viscous

Do you see it? One way or another, all of these words are wet, or at least damp. And there are a lot of them. The only dry gross words I can think of are *scabby* and a few words that mean “filthy” (e.g., dirty, grimy, grubby). Then there are general-purpose gross words like *vile*, *noxious*, and *abhorrent*. But other than that, gross means *wet!*

Still don't believe it? A Web site called Visual Thesaurus asked its readers to rate how much they like or dislike certain words. And the second-most-hated word was “moist.” (A friend once said that she dislikes cake mixes that are advertised as being “extra-moist” because that basically means “super-dank”!) Oh, and the most-hated word of all was “hate.” So a lot of people hate hate.<sup>[1]</sup>

Part of the appeal is that anything really gross is thought of as “off-limits.” And anything off-limits is immediately tantalizing. So it works like this: “Don't look! *Hey, I told you not to look!*”

Isn't that weird? No other animal is fascinated by gross stuff, because no other animal ever gets disgusted! If, for example, a dog wants to avoid something putrid, it just steps to the side and continues on with its life. What it *won't* do is start jumping around and shouting, “Oh, my, that dead squirrel is loathsome!”

So apparently only humans feel the emotion of disgust. And it really is an *emotion*, just like love or hate, or like that feeling you get when a person has a piece of toilet paper stuck to the bottom of his shoe and everyone is laughing, but the guy is totally clueless—what's that emotion called? Oh yeah: relief that it's not you.

Now, think about how powerfully your emotions can affect you. If you're really happy, you laugh. If you're really sad (did someone give you this book as a gift?), you cry.

## Words That Sound Gross (But Aren't!)

**ambisinistrous:** Clumsy; the opposite of ambidextrous.

**anonymuncule:** A generic little person.

**bifurcate:** To separate something into two parts.

**coccyx:** A tailbone. You have one.

**corpuscule:** A small cell, usually a blood cell.

**debag:** To remove someone's pants as a "joke."<sup>[2]</sup>

**eumorphous:** Well formed, as in, "Dad, this meat loaf is eumorphous."

**fard:** To cover one's face with makeup.

**finagle:** To get something by cheating.

**flange:** A thing that sticks out of something.  
(Yes, that is the worst definition of flange ever given.)

**fungible:** Something that can be replaced.

**gobemouche:** A person who believes anything.

**goulash:** A Hungarian stew.

**grinagog:** A person who smiles a lot.

**jentacular:** Having to do with breakfast.

**kankedort:** An awkward situation.

**mammothrept:** A spoiled kid.

**osculate:** To kiss, as in, "Timmy osculated his grandmother!"

**quag:** To shake something soft and flabby.  
(Hmmm, that actually *is* sort of gross...)



"Stop quagging me!"

**quisquillious:** Relating to garbage. (Hey, this one is gross too!)

**scrod:** A young cod or similar fish. (Now *that's* more like it.)

**sequacious:** Likely to follow the opinions and instructions of other people.

**seepage:** Stuff that is seeping. This word can be used with almost any gross word to brutal effect, i.e.,

butt seepage, booger seepage, cheese seepage, underwear seepage, etc.

**shiitake:** An Asian mushroom.

**spitchcock:** A way of preparing eel for a meal.

**storge:** Instinctive affection, like the kind you have for this book.

**tardiloquent:** Speaking slowly.

**turgid:** Puffed out.

**umbripholous:** Fond of shade.

**zugzwang:** Having to make a move in a chess game, despite the fact that there are no good moves available.

But if you're really disgusted, you barf. Beat that! Clearly, disgust is the most powerful emotion of all. But perhaps because of its vast power, some people think that disgust is just a feeling. These people have confused the emotion of disgust with the feeling of nausea. Fools!

**But what is it that makes something disgusting? Famed scientist Charles Darwin pondered this question in 1872.**



His theory was that disgust is universal to all cultures. And he was right! Let me add to this my belief that there is a sliding scale of disgust that starts with the distasteful (e.g., bad breath) and goes to the revoltingly nasty (zombie breath). Some examples on the scale from least gross to most gross:



**Distasteful (slightly offensive)**

- A burp
- A dry booger
- A sweaty T-shirt
- Discovering you have acne
- Thinking you might be able to smell someone's swamp gas



### **Disgusting (offensive)**

- Someone who burps loudly, then says, "I can taste my lunch!"
- A slimy booger
- A sweaty T-shirt with a bloodstain
- Popping a zit and having the pus hit the mirror
- Poop

## Revoltingly Disgusting (so offensive, you



don't even want to think about it)

- Someone who burps loudly, says, "Oops!" and then vomits
- Seeing someone else pop a zit while they cut one at the same time
- A T-shirt drenched in sweat, blood, and pus. (And it's yours!)
- Oozing, slimy poop on a finger. (And it's yours!)
- A putrefying, slimy dead body that stinks. (And it's—*wait, that wouldn't make any sense!*)

Can we define **WHY** some things are grosser than others? Maybe! It seems like the most disgusting things either have to do with death and/or body fluids and discharges. And something really nasty often has the potential to "contaminate" you. In other words, just by being close to a slimy booger (germs!) or a dead body (zombie germs!), you might get infected and contaminated in some way.

The actual feeling of disgust comes from two places. One part of disgust is in your mind. Let me give an example. In a grossness experiment, volunteers were given identical vials. These vials had been prepared to contain a “decaying” odor. One group of the volunteers was told the vials contained cheese. And many of them reported *liking* the smell.

But the other group was told that their vials contained poop. These volunteers freaked out! Oh, the smell was so horribly disgusting, they just couldn’t stand it. Vile vials! Get them away! (Of course, the only difference between the vials was in the smellers’ minds.)

## Pop Quiz!

**Who do you think is easier to gross out:**

Young people or old folks?

Women or men?<sup>[3]</sup>

This brings me to the second part of where disgust comes from. It’s believed that recognizing something as gross is actually an instinct. At least, that’s what Dr. Valerie Curtis says. And she studies diarrheal diseases (diseases involving diarrhea!), so I guess she would know. Dr. Curtis believes that disgust has helped keep humans from going extinct.

Curtis’s studies suggest that almost every culture finds things having to do with poop, puke, spit, blood, sweat, and pus disgusting. Why? Since every human has a biological reason to avoid disease, we just might have a “disgust” gene in our **DNA** that keeps us

alive. And that's why you naturally avoid poop (*right?*): so that you can steer clear of its disease-causing viruses and bacteria.

## Pop Quiz!

There is only one bodily fluid or discharge that is not rated as disgusting by the majority of people. What is it?<sup>[4]</sup>

What happens if your body gets contaminated by one of these awful things? It kicks into overdrive disgust mode. And you may not even be aware of it until you start throwing up. That's because there is something inside you called the "gut brain." This is a network of nerve cells that run in and out of your whole digestive system. If your gut brain detects food poisoning that's coming from a rancid piece of pork inside you, it will try to eject that putrid pork as quickly as possible: **BLEAUGH!**