

Constipation during Pregnancy

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Background

- Outside of pregnancy, 7 in every 100 women experience constipation
- During pregnancy this may increase to 39 in every 100 women
- Begins in first trimester and may continue up to 12 weeks after birth
- Caused by
 - hormone changes of pregnancy making the bowel more sluggish
 - enlarging uterus compressing the bowel
- If associated with vomiting, requires urgent exam and evaluation

Prevention

- Make high fiber fruits a large part of your diet- apples, pears, cherries, prunes, etc
- Eat a lot of vegetables
- Drink at least six glasses of water each day
- 1 cup mixture of equal parts bran flakes, applesauce & prune juice daily
- Do 15 to 30 minutes of walking each day
- If starting to have problems take 1-4 doses of Miralax each day for 1 week

Treatment

- For fast relief drink one bottle of Mag Citrate; may combine with use of one Fleet Enema (pushed up the rectum) in the evening then repeated the following morning. These are both over the counter.
- If severe, a bowel prep such as Co Lyely may be used

- requires a prescription.
- If not severe, a stool softener such as Lactulose syrup may be used as both treatment and as maintenance
 - also requires a prescription.

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