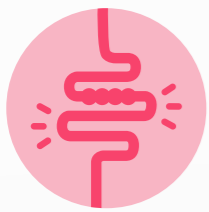


Constipation during pregnancy: Tips for relief



Constipation is a common problem during pregnancy.¹

4 in 10

4 in 10 pregnant women will experience constipation during their pregnancy.²

Constipation during pregnancy is a result of slow gut motility due to smooth muscle relaxation brought about **by increased progesterone hormones.**¹



What are the short- and long-term effects of constipation during pregnancy?^{2,3,4}

Short-term

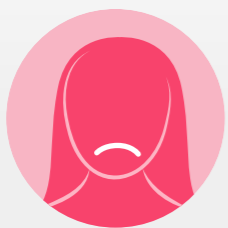


Disruption of the mother - child bond after delivery⁴



Adverse effects on the **mother's physical and social health**³

Long-term



Haemorrhoids or rectal prolapse²



Pelvic floor dysfunction²

References

1. Constipation During Pregnancy. (2021, July 27). American Pregnancy Association. Retrieved October 14, 2022, from <https://americanpregnancy.org/healthy-pregnancy/pregnancy-health-wellness/constipation-during-pregnancy>.
2. Shin, G. H., Toto, E. L., & Schey, R. (2015). Pregnancy and postpartum bowel changes: constipation and fecal incontinence. Official journal of the American College of Gastroenterology ACG, 110(4), 521-529.
3. Turawa, E. B., Musekiwa, A., & Rohwer, A. C. (2020). Interventions for preventing postpartum constipation. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, (8).
4. Cheng, C. Y., Fowles, E. R., & Walker, L. O. (2006). Postpartum maternal health care in the United States: A critical review. The Journal of perinatal education, 15(3), 34.

What to eat to prevent or relieve constipation?



Pregnant women should try to consume **25 to 30 grams of dietary fiber each day** to relieve constipation's symptoms.¹



Foods rich in fiber are easily fermented in the colon and can absorb water as it passes through the digestive system, **making defecation easier.**¹

Vegetables



Fresh fruit



Whole-grain bread



Prunes



Breakfast cereals and Bran



References

1. Constipation During Pregnancy. (2021, July 27). American Pregnancy Association. Retrieved October 14, 2022, from <https://americanpregnancy.org/healthy-pregnancy/pregnancy-health-wellness/constipation-during-pregnancy>.

What to recommend patients with constipation?



Advise



Drinking **10 to 12 cups of fluids each day**: to ensure softer stools¹

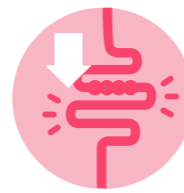


Get **at least 150 minutes of exercise** (for example, 30 minutes 5 days a week)²

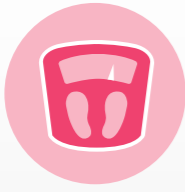
Benefits of exercise during pregnancy²



Reduces **back pain**



Eases **constipation**



Promotes **healthy weight gain** during pregnancy



Helps you to **lose the baby weight** after your baby is born



Improves your overall fitness and strengthens your heart and blood vessels



May **decrease your risk of gestational diabetes, preeclampsia, and cesarean birth**

Avoid¹



The use of laxatives for the treatment of constipation during pregnancy because they might stimulate uterine contractions & cause dehydration



Big meals. Spreading out food intake by eating smaller, more frequent meals is recommended



Refined grains (white bread, refined cereals and pasta)

References

1. Constipation During Pregnancy. (2021, July 27). American Pregnancy Association. Retrieved October 14, 2022, from <https://americanpregnancy.org/healthy-pregnancy/pregnancy-health-wellness/constipation-during-pregnancy>.
2. Exercise During Pregnancy. (n.d.). ACOG. Retrieved October 14, 2022, from <https://www.acog.org/womens-health/faqs/exercise-during-pregnancy>