



Constipation is commonly caused in about 40% of pregnant women, particularly in early pregnancy, by the effect of progesterone on smooth muscles, moving food more slowly through the digestive system. This allows your intestinal tract to absorb more nutrients and fluid for your body, but can also lead to constipation. It is also caused by the displacement of the intestines by the growing uterus. Constipation can also be caused by dehydration as maternal need for water increases and may not be met with adequate fluid intake. Constipation is a hard or dry stool that is difficult to pass.

#### General Recommendations:

- Increase fluid intake to at least 3 quarts of water per day
- Natural Calm or similar magnesium drink in the evenings (liquid magnesium is best)
- Increase fiber in your diet: veggies, fresh and dried fruits, dried apricots, whole grains, particularly leafy greens and celery, grapes and grape juice, apples and apple juice, bran and cereals and breads high in bran content, raw carrots, peaches, pears, pineapple, probiotics, pistachios, papaya, pickle juice
- Moving your body may stimulate the bowels, such as a 20 minute walk every day
- Hot tea in the morning can initiate movement of the bowels
- Drink a hot liquid followed by a cold liquid. This may help stimulate the colon to bring on a bowel movement.
- Eating prunes or consuming prune juice or black cherry juice are tried-and-true methods to combat constipation.
- Stool softeners and glycerin suppositories are all safe for use in pregnancy, and can be used when other changes aren't helping. Stimulant laxatives should be avoided.
- Limiting caffeine to 1 cup coffee or caffeinated tea daily
- Avoid straining. Use a squatty potty or stool when on the toilet to raise the knees.
- Chiropractic, massage, acupressure or acupuncture
- Warm packs on the abdomen. Castor oil packs

#### Other:

- Epsom salt bath or foot soak
- Magnesium spray, purchase or make.  
1/2 cup magnesium chloride flakes or epsom salts, 1/2 cup warm water  
Dissolve magnesium in water and use in a small spray bottle on skin. Don't use on recently shaved skin. It can burn/itch until your body gets used to it so start small and slow. Rinse off after 20 minutes if the irritation is too much and try to increase the time you leave it on each day/week.

#### Herbal Remedies:

- Psyllium seed (also known as psyllium husk) can be added to oatmeal or taken in capsules (5-10 gm daily) or take 2 TB in a small glass of water, swirl and drink quickly
- Yellow Dock Root as a tea or tincture
- Slippery elm powder can be added to foods

#### Medications safe for pregnancy if constipation doesn't improve with above remedies:

- Colace
- MiraLAX
- Glycerin suppositories
- Metamucil
- Milk of Magnesia
- Senokot
- Dulcolax