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CONSTIPATION

Constipation during pregnancy is a common and annoying discomfort. Constipation occurs because your stomach and other digestive organs are slowing down due to the effects of hormones and there is less room due to the enlarging uterus. One of the important elements in your prenatal vitamins is iron, which is needed during pregnancy for growth of the baby, but also has a constipating effect.

It is important during pregnancy to avoid constipation in order to decrease maternal discomfort, but also to decrease the incidence of hemorrhoids, which can be caused by increased straining and by the increased pressure of the baby on the veins in the pelvic area.

These are some of the ways to avoid and help decrease the incidence of constipation during pregnancy. If these suggestions are not relieving your constipation, please inform your care provider.

1. Eat a diet high in fiber by adding or increasing the amount of raw vegetables, fruit, dried fruit, and whole grain cereals.
2. DRINK AT LEAST THREE QUARTS of fluid per day. This fluid should be at least one half or more in water and additional fruit juice. Avoid large amounts of caffeinated beverages.
3. Get regular exercise. Walking is an easy and effective exercise during pregnancy.
4. Do not delay having a bowel movement when the urge occurs. Try eight ounces of warm liquid before breakfast and allow yourself time to relax and use the bathroom every morning.
5. Avoid over-the-counter laxatives. If the above suggestions and dietary changes do not alleviate the problem, talk with your care provider about the use of Metamucil® or stool softeners such as Colace® or Milk of Magnesia®.

HIGH FIBER FOODS:

CEREALS:

All Bran®
Bran Buds®
Bran Chex®
Bran Flakes®
ShreddedWheat®
GrapeNuts®
CracklingOat Bran®
Cornbread

OTHER FOODS:

Popcorn, air-popped
Whole wheat bread, muffins
Kidney, navy, lima beans
All vegetables, raw or cooked
All fruits, especially fresh and raw
Raisins and prunes (dried plums)
Prune juice
Whole grain pasta