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***Constipation***

During pregnancy, your intestinal tract slows down, and you may need to make up for this. You may also become constipated from irregular eating habits, changes in environment, stress, more iron and more calcium in your diet, and some medicines. Constipation refers only to bowel movements that are hard in consistency or painful to pass.

**Prevention**

- ❖ Drink a lot of water (at least 3-4 quarts a day).
- ❖ Exercise every day. A half hour walk is helpful.
- ❖ Eat raw vegetables, cooked fruit (especially prunes), prune juice, bran (3 Tablespoons per day), and whole grain products such as whole wheat bread, brown rice, oatmeal.  
CAUTION: Raw apples increase constipation.
- ❖ Chew your food thoroughly.
- ❖ Follow good bowel habits:
  - Go when you feel the urge; do not hold it back.
  - Wait until you feel the urge; do not force it.
  - Relax and take time for your bowel movements.
  - Raise your feet on a stool or box during bowel movements to reduce straining.

**Useful Remedies**

- ❖ Drinking either hot or very cold liquid on an empty stomach may stimulate the bowels.
- ❖ All of the suggestions for prevention can also be used as remedies.

**Possible Choices of Medicines**

- ❖ Most people do not need laxatives. The remedies mentioned above usually work well. If you must use a laxative try a “bulk-producing laxative such as **Metamucil**.

**Metamucil:**

Any flavor may be used. Take 1 rounded teaspoon in 8 ounces of liquid (juice or water) every day or two to three times a day till constipation is relieved. Then take daily as needed.

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO FOLLOW THE METAMUCIL BY AN ADDITIONAL 8 OUNCES OF LIQUID.

**Medicines Not to be Used**

- ❖ Any type of laxative other than “bulk-producing” ones should be used only under the direct supervision of your health care provider. Some may be too strong or may contain substances, which could harm your baby.