

How to manage constipation:

Pregnancy often causes constipation (harder and more difficult to move bowel movements).

Water

Increase the amount of water you drink daily (2 glasses more than your usual).

Fibre

Try to make sure you are getting enough fibre from your foods. Most people are surprised to find out their diet is not high in fibre, even when they are eating what they thought was a healthy diet. The recommended amount of dietary fibre for an adult woman is 25-30 gms per day. This can be difficult to get from foods. One simple strategy to get half of the daily-recommended fibre is to include a serving of a high fibre cereal such as 'All-Bran Buds' into your diet. This would give you an additional 13 gms of fibre from the 1/3 cup serving (approximately 2 heaping tablespoons). Sprinkled onto yogurt provides a crunchy topping or the high fibre cereal can replace a portion of your usual cold cereal if you prefer.

For some people, eating a few dried prunes or drinking a small glass of prune juice daily, will also help manage constipation. Prunes and prune juice contain sorbitol, which is a naturally occurring sugar alcohol, sorbitol, that can have a mild laxative effect. Prunes and prune juice are best used in combination with a diet high in fibre and fluids.

A short list of some common foods and the fibre content of these foods is listed below. Health Link BC can provide more information about fibre in foods or you can call 811 to speak to a nutritionist.

www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/fibre , www.nlockfood.ca/en/Articles/Fibre/

Food		Portion	Fibre per serving
Brown bread		1 slice	2 gm
Multigrain bread		1 slice	3 gm
	Special K cereal	1 cup	0 gm
	Rice Krispy cereal	1.2 cup	1 gm
	Shreddies cereal	1 cup	6 gm
	All Bran Buds cereal	1/3 cup	13 gm
Medium apple		1	5 gm
Medium banana		1	4 gm
Prunes		5	3 gm
Small orange		1	2.3 gm
Romaine lettuce		1 cup	1 gm
Broccoli		1 cup	2.4 gm

Exercise

Exercise will help with constipation. Aim for moderate-intensity exercise, at least 150 minutes over 1 week, for example 30 minutes a day.

Medications for constipation

Some constipation treatments are safe to take throughout the pregnancy, and available at most pharmacies or grocery stores:

- Fibre products – e.g. Metamucil or Benefiber
- PEG 3350 products – e.g. Restoralax or Lax-a-day