



## Digestive Health and Pregnancy: Heartburn, Constipation, Gas and Bloating

Digestive changes are common during pregnancy and can include heart burn, constipation, diarrhea, gas, and bloating. If any of these symptoms persist or become problematic, it is recommended to speak with your doctor.

**Heartburn** is common during pregnancy and can occur due to changing hormones, your baby's increasing size, and fatty and/or spicy foods.

### Remedies for Heartburn

- Limit fatty or spicy foods
- Sit up while eating
- Avoid eating 1 hour before going to bed
- Avoid lying down after eating and sleep with your head raised above the rest of your body
- Avoid tight fitting clothing (pants or belts that leave a ring around your stomach are too tight)
- Chew gum or suck on ginger, peppermint drops
- Consult your doctor before taking over-the-counter medications, including antacids

**Constipation, gas, and bloating** are common during pregnancy and can occur due to dehydration, iron supplementation, hormone changes, and increased progesterone that cause muscles to relax and slow down digestive tract motility.

## Remedies for Constipation

- Eat a high fiber diet
- Eat at least 25 g of fiber per day
- Eat at least 5 servings of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains daily
- Consider a fiber supplement
- Limit gas causing foods such as beans and cabbage
- Increase fluids for proper hydration
- Drink 10 - 12 cups of fluids each day
- Change iron supplement and look for high iron foods
- Iron amino acid chelate – provides a faster rate of improvement of hemoglobin level and is better tolerated, less likely to cause constipation<sup>4</sup>
- A few iron rich foods include: meat, dark green vegetables, beans/lentils, nuts, seeds, raisins, and iron fortified grains
- Relax
- When symptoms arise, slow down and take deep breaths
- Exercise daily
- Moderate exercise such as walking, biking, and yoga; swimming helps the intestines work by stimulating your bowels.
- Talk with your doctor before taking laxatives

***\*Always consult with your physician before starting any exercise program.***

*The information contained here within is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read.*

*If you think you may have a medical emergency, call your doctor, go to the emergency department, or call 911 immediately. GemCare Wellness (GCW) does not recommend or endorse any specific tests, physicians, products, procedures, opinions, or other information that may be mentioned here within. Reliance on any information provided by GCW, GCW employees, contracted writers, or medical professionals presenting content for publication here within is solely at your own risk.*

### Resources:

1. <https://americanpregnancy.org/pregnancy-health/constipation-during-pregnancy/>
2. <https://similac.com/pregnancy/health-tips/constipation-heartburn-digestion>
3. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/constipation/in-depth/laxatives/art-20045906>
4. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28073037>

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