



Constipation/bowel changes information

Constipation is very common, particularly early on in pregnancy, as the hormones circulating in your body change to support the pregnancy. The easiest way to support good gut health is to make sure you are well hydrated, ideally drinking two litres of water each day. You can also try to increase the fibre in your diet, through plenty of fruit and vegetables, wholemeal carbohydrates and beans/pulses.

Movement and exercise - even just walking - will aid your digestive system and keep your muscles working well throughout pregnancy.

Some people find that iron tablets - which are commonly advised in pregnancy - cause or worsen constipation. There are liquid supplements available or other ways of boosting your natural iron levels. Speak to your midwife if you think iron tablets are causing you problems.

Sometimes you may find that your stool is looser than usual, at the end of pregnancy this is sometimes considered to be an indicator that labour is imminent! The hormone relaxin has many functions in pregnancy, including helping changes to the cardiovascular and renal systems to support all the additional demands of the growing foetus. As the name suggests, it relaxes muscles and tissues, which helps your body to stretch and grow to accommodate your baby and uterus. There is also smooth muscle in your bowels, so as this softens you may find that you suffer from diarrhoea.