



食康乐坐月子外送食补

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## Pre-natal Q & A

### Is my prenatal vitamin causing my constipation?

Probably not. Constipation is a common problem during pregnancy. The main culprit is the higher level of hormones you produce during pregnancy — which slow the movement of food through your digestive tract — and, later in pregnancy, the pressure of your growing uterus on your rectum.

Taking an iron supplement, particularly at a high dose, can make things worse, but the amount of iron in most prenatal vitamins is not usually a problem. Check the label on your prenatal vitamin. If you're not anemic, you probably don't need more than 30 milligrams of iron a day. If your prenatal vitamin has more than that, you can ask your doctor or midwife about switching to a brand with less iron.

To help ease your constipation, make sure you're getting a minimum of 64 ounces of fluids daily (eight glasses, preferably of water), and increase your consumption of high-fiber foods such as whole grains, beans, vegetables, and fruits with skins. Exercise can also ease bowel movements. If all else fails, your practitioner may recommend that you take an over-the-counter fiber supplement.

### I usually drink skim milk. Now that I'm pregnant, should I switch to whole milk?

You can continue drinking skim milk during pregnancy — there's no need to switch to whole milk. The only nutrient whole milk contains that skim milk doesn't is fat. And while fat is important during pregnancy, you're probably getting enough unless you're consciously eating a low-fat diet. Doctors recommend that 30 percent or less of your daily calories should come from fat. To get adequate amounts of calcium and vitamin D during pregnancy, drink 4 to 8-ounce glasses ( 950 ml ) of skim milk each day, or eat a variety of other calcium-rich foods such as yogurt, cottage cheese, and calcium-fortified orange juice — to name a few.

### Why do I seem to have so much gas now that I'm pregnant?

The primary reason is that during early pregnancy, your body produces major doses of *progesterone*, a hormone that relaxes smooth muscle tissue throughout your body, including your gastrointestinal tract. This relaxation slows down your digestive processes, which can cause increased gas, bloating, burping, and flatulence and create generally miserable sensations in your gut, especially after

a big meal. In later pregnancy, your growing uterus crowds your abdominal cavity, which can further slow digestion, and pushes on your stomach, making you feel even more bloated after eating.

### **What else can I do to get relief?**

These suggestions may also lessen the frequency and severity of your symptoms:

- Don't eat big meals. Instead, eat several small meals throughout the day.
- Don't talk while you're eating. Take your time and chew thoroughly.
- Limit your fluid intake during meals — you can make up for it in between meals.
- Drink from a glass, not a bottle or a straw, and don't gulp your beverages.
- Avoid carbonated drinks.
- Sit up while you're eating or drinking, even if you're just having a small snack

### **Can I get some relief by changing my diet?**

The most effective way to reduce gas may be to cut back on the foods that seem to cause it.

The foods most likely to cause gas are beans, cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, and asparagus. All contain the sugar raffinose, which causes gas for a lot of people. Other people have trouble with onions, pears, artichokes, and sodas and fruit drinks sweetened with the sugar fructose. Sodas and fruit drinks should be avoided anyway, as they are empty calories and the carbonation in sodas can increase bloating.

Don't skip meals or diet while you're pregnant. If you still have nausea, eat smaller, more frequent meals, and try to avoid soda and junk food.

### **How can I manage my mood swings?**

First, understand that mood swings are part of the pregnancy experience. It's not surprising that you're feeling highs and lows, sometimes from one minute to the next. Knowing that you're behaving as expected (and as your hormones dictate) may quell some of the uneasiness you may be feeling.

That said, managing your stress level can help a lot. Don't let frustration build up in your life. Find ways to take care of yourself emotionally. Take breaks, spend time with your partner, get plenty of sleep, get regular physical activity, and eat well. If you find anxiety creeping in, try taking a pregnancy yoga class or practicing meditation.

And whenever you're down in the dumps, do something that makes you feel good. Take a nap, go for a walk, or see a movie with a friend. Don't be so hard on yourself. Air out your feelings to friends and family, or, if you prefer, to your healthcare provider or a therapist. Pregnancy is a huge deal. It's a life-changing event that's bound to make you sometimes feel overwhelmed, irritable, and anxious.