

# Functional Constipation

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There are different types of constipation. This sheet is about functional constipation in a pregnancy or while breastfeeding. This information should not take the place of medical care and advice from your healthcare providers.

## ***What is functional constipation?***

Constipation (difficulty in emptying the bowels) is the most common complaint of the digestive system. There are different types of constipation. Functional constipation is a type of chronic constipation that needs to be diagnosed by a healthcare provider following a set of diagnostic criteria. If you are taking medication for functional constipation, contact MotherToBaby to discuss your specific medications.

## ***I have functional constipation. Can it make it harder for me to become pregnant?***

It is not known if functional constipation can make it harder to get pregnant.

## ***Does having functional constipation increase the chance for miscarriage?***

Miscarriage is common and can occur in any pregnancy for many different reasons. Studies have not been done to see if functional constipation increases the chance for miscarriage.

## ***Does having functional constipation increase the chance of birth defects?***

Every pregnancy starts out with a 3-5% chance of having a birth defect. This is called the background risk. Studies have not been done to see if functional constipation increases the chance for birth defects.

## ***Would having functional constipation increase the chance of other pregnancy related problems?***

This has not been well studied. One study reported a higher chance for C-section among 221 people with functional constipation. Other factors, such as BMI, age, and less active lifestyles, could have also led to a higher chance for C-section among the people in this study.

## ***Does having functional constipation in pregnancy affect future behavior or learning for the child?***

Studies have not been done to see if functional constipation can cause behavior or learning issues for the child.

## ***Breastfeeding while I have functional constipation:***

Functional constipation is unlikely to interfere with breastfeeding. Contact MotherToBaby to discuss any specific medications that you might be taking. Be sure to talk to your healthcare provider about all of your breastfeeding questions.

## ***If a male has functional constipation, can it make it harder to get a partner pregnant or increase the chance of birth defects?***

Studies have not been done to see if functional constipation could affect male fertility or increase the chance of birth defects. In general, exposures that fathers or sperm donors have are unlikely to increase the risks to a pregnancy. For more information, please see the MotherToBaby fact sheet Paternal Exposures at <https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/paternal-exposures-pregnancy/>.

*MotherToBaby is currently conducting a study looking at functional constipation in pregnancy. If you would like to learn more, please call 1-877-311-8972 or visit <https://mothertobaby.org/join-study/>.*

**Please click [here](#) to view references.**

**Questions? Call 866.626.6847 | Text 855.999.3525 | Email or Chat at [MotherToBaby.org](https://www.MotherToBaby.org).**

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