

Question 40 – May 8

A 28 year old woman in the third trimester of pregnancy complains of worsening constipation as her pregnancy has progressed. She has had no response to increased dietary fiber. Which of the following regimens would be appropriate for her?

- A. Sodium phosphate orally
- B. Castor oil
- C. Lubiprostone
- D. Sorbitol or lactulose
- E. Mineral oil

Answer: D

Sodium phosphate can cause fluid overload and/or electrolyte disturbance in pregnancy. Castor oil can induce premature labor. Lubiprostone has been associated with fetal loss in experimental animals and is contraindicated in pregnancy; a pregnancy test is advised before administering it to women capable of bearing children. Mineral oil can cause hypoprothrombinemia and neonatal bleeding if used regularly. Sorbitol and lactulose are not absorbed systemically and are considered safe for use in pregnancy.

References:

Muller-Lissner SA, Kamm MA, Scarpignato C, Wald A. Myths and misconceptions about chronic constipation. *Am J Gastroenterol* 2005;100:232-42.

Prather CM. Pregnancy-related constipation. *Curr Gastroenterol Rep* 2004;6:402-4.