

**Focus on obstetrics in general practice : Duphalac.**

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**Publication/Creation**

[1976]

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# Focus on Obstetrics

in general practice



**duphalac**<sup>®</sup>  
lactulose

# Obstetrics in general practice

## the role of duphalac

Constipation during and after pregnancy has several well-known causes. The raised maternal oestrogen and progesterone levels are known to cause lack of tone of the bowel muscle. Iron therapy, too, is a frequent cause of constipation in a significant number of women, and, in later pregnancy, the expanding uterus forms a mechanical obstruction leading to difficulty in the movement of faeces along the bowel. Immediately after the birth of the baby lax abdominal musculature may be a simple cause of constipation. In mothers who have had a perineal tear or episiotomy, fear of pain and discomfort are also important factors.

The treatment of choice should be free of troublesome side effects, efficacious and non-habit forming. Such treatment should also allow gentle defaecation with a minimum of pain after a perineal tear or episiotomy. Furthermore, throughout the whole of pregnancy, and particularly in the nursing mother, it is important that the medication is not absorbed if this can be avoided.

A great deal of evidence for Duphalac demonstrates its suitability as a treatment of constipation during and after pregnancy.

### **Freedom from unwanted effects**

'Side effects in these post-partum women were of very minor importance.'<sup>1</sup>

'Side effects caused by the medication were infrequent and when present were of minor extent.'<sup>2</sup>

### **Effectiveness**

'The major criterion for success was adjudged to be the ability to open the bowels unaided by the third post-partum day. This was achieved in 61.1% of the Duphalac treated patients but only in 39.9% of the untreated women.'<sup>1</sup>

### **Not absorbed**

'Lactulose is an unabsorbed disaccharide...'<sup>3</sup>

### **Reduced post-partum pain**

'Results showed a statistically significant difference in favour of the Duphalac group, both in the number of patients having pain and in the stool consistency at the first post-operative defaecation.'<sup>4</sup>

### **Restoration of normal function**

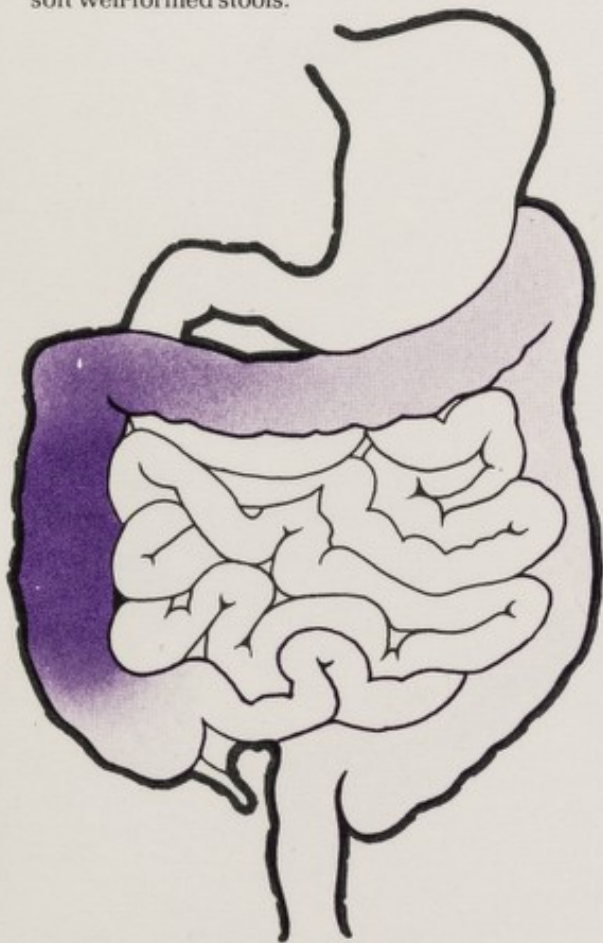
'Duphalac is a useful drug for the uncomplicated re-establishment of bowel function in women just after delivery, allowing them to go home without bowel problems.'<sup>1</sup>

### **Non-habit forming**

'Prolonged administration caused no symptoms of intestinal irritation or habit formation.'<sup>5</sup>

# The unique mode of action of duphalac

Lactulose is a synthetic disaccharide which, since there is no specific splitting enzyme, passes unchanged through the small intestine. It is only when it reaches the proximal colon that the colonic flora acts on it, producing simple organic substances, mainly lactates, believed necessary for normal bowel movement. These tend to retain water in the lumen of the bowel, causing an increase in stool volume and to restore normal physiological peristalsis. This results in a regular, controlled bowel action with soft well-formed stools.



# duphalac<sup>®</sup>

lactulose

**smooth efficient  
faecal excretion**

**I am interested in Duphalac in Obstetrics**

**Please send me further information**

(Block letters or stamp please)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_



P1

# duphalac<sup>®</sup>

lactulose

## Prescribing information

### Presentation

A pleasantly flavoured syrup containing 3.35g lactulose per 5ml in easy-pour bottles of 300ml and 1 litre.

### Indications

Duphalac is particularly suitable for cases in which maximum ease of defaecation is desirable.

For instance constipation associated with:

1. Paediatric conditions and problems such as anal fissure, spina bifida or psychological problems.
2. Pregnancy and the post-partum period.
3. Bedridden and geriatric patients.
4. Cardiac and hypertensive cases.
5. Surgical procedures, painful rectal and anal conditions.
6. Constipating drug therapy such as opiates.
7. Laxative dependence.
8. Barium retention following x-ray investigations.

### Dosage and Administration

Initially Duphalac may be given twice daily. In due course the dose should be adjusted to the needs of the individual, but the following serves as a guide.

#### Starting dose

Adults	15ml	Twice daily
Children 5 to 10 yrs	10ml	Twice daily
Children under 5 yrs	5ml	Twice daily
Babies	2.5ml	Twice daily

Since Duphalac is freely miscible, it can be mixed with a favourite drink such as milk, fruit juices or soda water. Because of its physiological mode of action, full effect may not be seen until 48 hours have elapsed.

### Contra-indication

Galactosaemia.

NB. Because lactulose is not significantly absorbed it is unlikely to affect diabetics.

### Side Effects

During the first few days of administration flatulence may occur, particularly at high dosage. This usually proves transient.

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### References

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3. Bown, R. L. et al, (1974) Gut **15**, 999.
4. Porter, N., (1975) Brit. J. Clin. Prac. **29**, No. 9.
5. Eustathios, K. G., (1969) Galenos **11**, 411.

Full prescribing information available:

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