



Weill Cornell Medical College

ClinicalKey®

Patient Education:

Abdominal Pain, Pediatric

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Abdominal Pain, Pediatric

Abdominal pain is one of the most common complaints in pediatrics. Many things can cause abdominal pain, and the causes change as your child grows. Usually, abdominal pain is not serious and will improve without treatment. It can often be observed and treated at home. Your child's health care provider will take a careful history and do a physical exam to help diagnose the cause of your child's pain. The health care provider may order blood tests and X-rays to help determine the cause or seriousness of your child's pain. However, in many cases, more time must pass before a clear cause of the pain can be found. Until then, your child's health care provider may not know if your child needs more testing or further treatment.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Monitor your child's abdominal pain for any changes.
- Give medicines only as directed by your child's health care provider.
- **Do not** give your child laxatives unless directed to do so by the health care provider.
- Try giving your child a clear liquid diet (broth, tea, or water) if directed by the health care provider. Slowly move to a bland diet as tolerated. Make sure to do this only as directed.
- Have your child drink enough fluid to keep his or her urine clear or pale yellow.
- Keep all follow-up visits as directed by your child's health care provider.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your child's abdominal pain changes.
- Your child does not have an appetite or begins to lose weight.
- Your child is constipated or has diarrhea that does not improve over 2–3 days.
- Your child's pain seems to get worse with meals, after eating, or with certain foods.
- Your child develops urinary problems like bedwetting or pain with urinating.
- Pain wakes your child up at night.
- Your child begins to miss school.
- Your child's mood or behavior changes.
- Your child who is older than 3 months has a fever.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your child's pain does not go away or the pain increases.
- Your child's pain stays in one portion of the abdomen. Pain on the right side could be caused by appendicitis.
- Your child's abdomen is swollen or bloated.
- Your child who is younger than 3 months has a fever of 100°F (38°C) or higher.
- Your child vomits repeatedly for 24 hours or vomits blood or green bile.
- There is blood in your child's stool (it may be bright red, dark red, or black).
- Your child is dizzy.
- Your child pushes your hand away or screams when you touch his or her abdomen.
- Your infant is extremely irritable.

- Your child has weakness or is abnormally sleepy or sluggish (*lethargic*).
- Your child develops new or severe problems.
- Your child becomes dehydrated. Signs of dehydration include:
 - Extreme thirst.
 - Cold hands and feet.
 - Blotchy (*mottled*) or bluish discoloration of the hands, lower legs, and feet.
 - Not able to sweat in spite of heat.
 - Rapid breathing or pulse.
 - Confusion.
 - Feeling dizzy or feeling off-balance when standing.
 - Difficulty being awakened.
 - Minimal urine production.
 - No tears.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your child's condition.
- Will get help right away if your child is not doing well or gets worse.

This information is not intended to replace advice given to you by your health care provider. Make sure you discuss any questions you have with your health care provider.

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