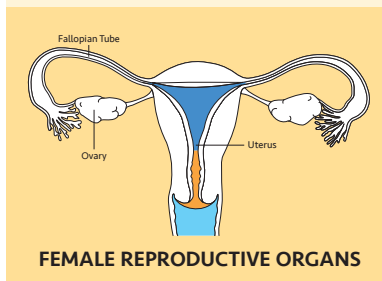
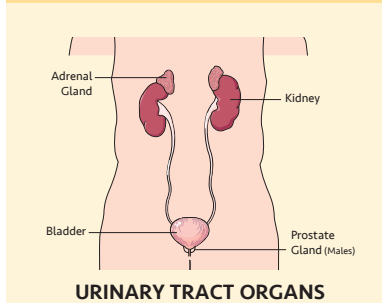
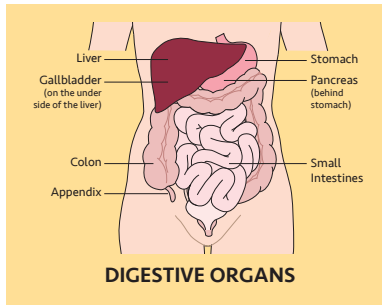


# Abdominal pain

The abdomen is the body region between the lower ribs and the pelvis. Many vital organs make up this body region.



## SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Mild to severe pain. It can feel dull or sharp.
- Acute (sudden) pain.
- Chronic pain. This is constant pain or pain that recurs over time.

The type of pain, its location, and other symptoms that come with it point to the cause.



## CAUSES

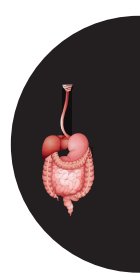
Abdominal pain can be a symptom of a problem that affects any of the organs in the digestive tract.

- Artery diseases, such as a blocked artery or an aneurysm.
- Celiac disease
- Constipation
- Crohn's disease
- Food borne illness
- Lactose intolerance
- Heartburn. Indigestion
- Infections, such as ones in the digestive tract and urinary tract
- Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)
- Diverticulitis
- Kidney stones and gall stones
- Menstrual cramps or ovarian cysts in females
- Stomach ulcers

## TREATMENT

Treatment depends on the cause. The key is knowing when it's just a minor problem like a mild stomach ache or when it's something worse. Pain that persists can be a sign of a medical condition or illness. Very severe abdominal pain usually needs immediate medical care.





## TRIAGE QUESTIONS

With abdominal pain, any heart attack warning sign present?

**NO** **YES** ➔ **GET EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE**

With abdominal pain, are any of these problems present?

- Vomit without stopping or you vomit blood or material that looks like coffee grounds
- You vomit, have a fever and shaking chills, and feel pain in one or both sides of your mid back or shoulders
- Dry mouth, excessive thirst, little or no urination, and dry skin that doesn't spring back after you pinch it
- Stools have blood or are tarlike and black in color.
- A recent injury to the abdomen
- Pain is so bad that you can't move or it gets a lot worse when you move
- Heavy vaginal bleeding and you are pregnant

**NO** **YES** ➔ **GET EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE**

With abdominal pain, do you have any of these problems?

- The pain spreads to the back, chest, or shoulders.
- You feel a mass in the abdomen that throbs or pulsates.
- Your abdomen is very tender when touched.
- Abdomen is swollen and keeps getting worse.

**NO** **YES** ➔ **GET EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE**

Severe abdominal pain or sudden, extreme, and constant?

**NO** **YES** ➔ **GET EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE**

Are all of these symptoms of appendicitis present?

- You have not had your appendix removed.
- Pain and tenderness usually start in the upper part of the stomach or around the belly button and moves to the lower right part of the abdomen. The pain can be sharp, severe, and felt more when the lower right abdomen is touched.
- Nausea, vomiting, or no appetite. Mild fever.

**NO** **YES** ➔ **GET EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE**

CONTINUE IN NEXT COLUMN

With abdominal pain, are symptoms of a kidney infection present?

- Chills. Fever.
- Pain in the back, side, or groin
- Nausea. vomiting.
- Cloudy, dark, bloody, or foul-smelling urine
- Frequent, painful urination

**NO** **YES** ➔ **SEE DOCTOR**

With abdominal pain, are symptoms of a kidney stone present?

- The pain started in your side or back before it moved to your abdomen or groin.
- The pain can be constant or come and go. The pain may be severe.
- Your urine is bloody, cloudy, or dark-colored.
- Nausea and vomiting
- Chills and fever, if you also have an infection

**NO** **YES** ➔ **SEE DOCTOR**

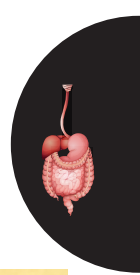
With abdominal pain, do you have any of these problems?

- The whites of your eyes or your skin looks yellow.
- Recurrent pain in the upper abdomen is temporarily relieved by antacids.
- Severe diarrhea or constipation lasts for more than a week.
- Skin on the abdomen is sensitive or you have a skin rash on one side of the abdomen.
- You have a bulge and/or discomfort (when pressed) anywhere in the abdomen.

**NO** **YES** ➔ **SEE DOCTOR**

CONTINUE ON NEXT PAGE

# Abdominal pain



With the abdominal pain, are any symptoms of a bladder infection present?

- Burning feeling during urination
- Frequent or intense urge to urinate, even with little urine to pass
- Pain or discomfort in the lower abdomen
- Cloudy, bloody, or strong-smelling urine

**NO**



**YES**

▶ **SEE DOCTOR**



Is swelling or discomfort in the groin made worse when you cough or lift heavy objects?

**NO**



**YES**

▶ **CALL DOCTOR**



With abdominal pain, do you have any of these problems?

- Continued belching, nausea, gas, or gurgling noises
- Pain worsens when you bend over or lie down.

**NO**



**YES**

▶ **CALL DOCTOR**



Are you female? Do you have abdominal pain and could you be pregnant?

**NO**



**YES**

▶ **CALL DOCTOR**



**USE SELF-CARE**



## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Crohn's & Colitis Foundation  
of America  
[ccfa.org](http://ccfa.org)



## SELF-CARE

- Find a comfortable position. Relax.
- Take an over-the-counter pain medicine as directed on the label.
- Apply a heating pad set on low (adults only).
- Use a hot water bottle on the area that aches.
- Don't wear clothes that fit tight.
- Don't exercise too hard.

**Crohn's Disease** is a chronic problem that can cause abdominal pain and diarrhea. Other symptoms are fever, fatigue, weight loss, and, at times, rectal bleeding or drainage. Symptoms occur when the disease flares up. This is followed by periods when symptoms go away or lessen.

With Crohn's disease, any part of the GI tract, from the mouth to the anus, can be inflamed. Usually, the colon and the last part of the small intestine, the ileum, are affected.

Treatment for Crohn's disease includes medicines, nutrition supplements, and surgery.