



# Abdominal Pain

Your abdomen extends from below your chest to your groin. Some people call it the stomach, but your abdomen contains many other important organs. The pain can come from one of these organs, or it may start somewhere else, such as your chest. Severe pain does not always mean there is a serious problem. However, mild pain does not always mean the problem is not serious. Visit your family doctor or a health clinic within the next 7 days.

## HOW TO CARE FOR YOURSELF AT HOME

- + Take your temperature every four (4) hours over the next 12 hours.
- + Take any medicines the Emergency doctor has recommended you to take. Ask your pharmacist if there are any side effects with the medications, as some may cause your stomach to become upset.
- + Drink clear fluids like water, herbal tea or clear broth for the first 24 hours. You can also drink decaffeinated sports/electrolyte drinks. Aim for at least 8 glasses of water a day.
- + Once your pain is gone, eat bland foods (BRAT diet) like bananas, rice, apple sauce and toast. Consider soups/congee, cooked cereals, crackers and plain baked potatoes.
- + **DO NOT** eat spicy foods, bran (too much fiber), candy or dairy products.
- + **DO NOT** drink alcohol, milk, or any drinks with caffeine (coffee, cola, tea, Red Bull, etc.).

## WHEN TO GET HELP

**Go to the nearest Emergency Department** if you are experiencing any of the following:

- + Your pain does not go away.
- + You are having more pain or it is now only in one specific area.
- + You also have pain in your chest, neck or shoulder.
- + You are having difficulty breathing and this is new for you.
- + You are throwing up (vomiting) often, especially if it has what looks like blood or coffee grounds in it.
- + If you see blood in the toilet when you go poo (have a bowel movement) or when you go pee (urinate). Blood can also appear as black, tarry stools.
- + You have a fever over 38.5°C (101.3F).
- + You are having loose/liquid poo (diarrhea) and it is not going away.
- + Your abdomen is stiff, hard, and tender to touch.
- + You cannot go poo (move your bowels) no matter how much you try, and you start throwing up.
- + You notice signs of dehydration: dry sticky mouth, extreme thirst, drowsiness, and dizziness.
- + For men, you have sharp pain in the scrotum or testicles.
- + You are not able to go pee (urinate).

## Abdominal Pain - *Continued*

### TO LEARN MORE ASK

- + Your family doctor.
- + HealthLinkBC - call 8-1-1 (7-1-1 for deaf or hard of hearing) or go online to [www.HealthLinkBC.ca](http://www.HealthLinkBC.ca)

### RECOMMENDED FOLLOW UP

- Follow up with your primary care provider in \_\_\_\_ days.

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Find this information sheet on the BC Emergency Medicine Network website:  
[www.bcemergencynetwork.ca/clinical\\_resource/abdominal-pain/](http://www.bcemergencynetwork.ca/clinical_resource/abdominal-pain/)

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[bcemn.ca](http://bcemn.ca)

The information in this document is intended solely for the person to whom it was given by the health care team. This information does not replace the advice given to you by your health care provider.

