

Causes

Abdominal pain can be a symptom of a problem that affects any of the organs shown in the boxes on the right side of this page. Causes of abdominal pain include:

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

Abdominal Pain

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

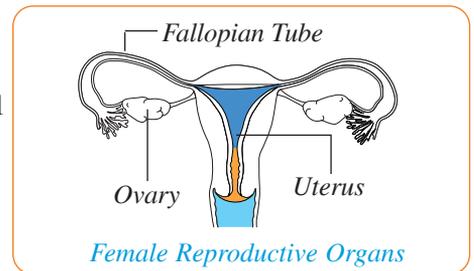
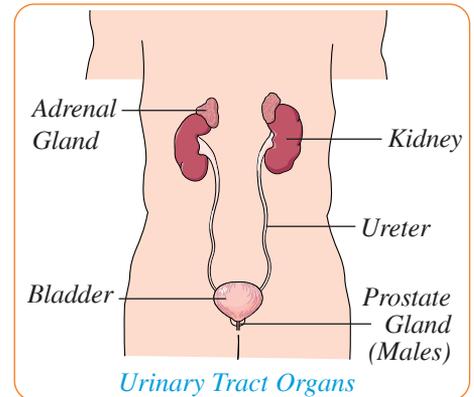
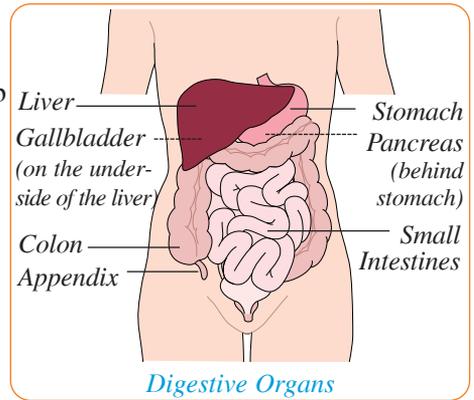
Signs & Symptoms

- 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.

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.





Abdominal Pain, Continued

Questions to Ask

With abdominal pain, is any **heart attack warning sign** listed at www.HealthyLearn.com present?



NO

With abdominal pain, are any of these problems present?

- You 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.
- You have dry mouth, excessive thirst, little or no urination, and dry skin that doesn't spring back after you pinch it.
- Your stools have blood or are tarlike and black in color.
- You had a recent injury to the abdomen.
- Pain is so bad that you can't move or it gets a lot worse when you move.
- You have heavy vaginal bleeding and you are pregnant.



NO

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.
- You don't know why your abdomen is swollen but it keeps getting worse.



NO

Is the abdominal pain very severe or sudden, extreme, and constant?



NO

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

With abdominal pain, are **symptoms of a kidney infection** listed at www.HealthyLearn.com present?



NO

With abdominal pain, are these **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. (See **Fever** at www.HealthyLearn.com.)



NO

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Abdominal Pain, Continued

Crohn's Disease is a chronic problem that can cause abdominal pain and diarrhea. Other symptoms are fever, fatigue, 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.

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

With the abdominal pain, are any **symptoms of a bladder infection** listed at www.HealthyLearn.com present?



NO

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



NO

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

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



NO



Get more information from:

HealthyLearn®
www.HealthyLearn.com

Crohn's & Colitis
Foundation of America
www.cdfa.org

Self-Care / Prevention

- 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).
- Don't wear clothes that fit tight.
- Don't exercise too hard.



Use a hot water bottle on the area that aches.