

# Abdominal Pain

## Call

**Call the doctor if you think your infant has stomach pain AND any of these symptoms:**

- Fever greater than 100.4° F. (See Fever section)
- Vomiting (not just spitting up)
- Your infant's stomach looks or feels swollen
- Black or maroon-colored (bloody) stools
- The infant is not eating or drinking, or has very little pee. (See sections on Vomiting and Diarrhea for more information about dehydration)

Remember, most practices have a doctor on call during times when the office isn't open. Call the office's main number for information.

## "Stomach aches"

**Infants:** It is difficult to know when infants have abdominal pain because they cannot talk to you about what is wrong.

- Infants with abdominal pain may be fussy and crying.
- They may bring their knees up to the chest as a sign that they are in pain.

**Children and Teenagers:**

There are many causes of stomach pain in children and teenagers. Here is a list of things you should be concerned about.

**Call the doctor if your child:**

- Has stomach pain located in the lower abdomen, on the right side.
- Has stomach pain that lasts longer than 6 hours and is getting worse.
- Has pain with peeing or blood in their urine.
- Has a sore throat and stomach pain.
- Has a fever.
- Has a skin rash.
- Is a boy and has pain in one or both testicles.
- Is a girl and has missed (is late for) her menstrual period.
- Is a girl and has vaginal discharge.
- Is not eating or drinking, or has very little pee.

(See sections on Vomiting and Diarrhea for more information about dehydration)

## Call

**Constipation**

Constipation occurs when bowel movements (BMs) are difficult or painful to pass. Children differ in the number of BMs they normally have each day. However, if a child has not had a BM in over 3 days, he or she may be constipated.

- Children may feel the urge to have a bowel movement but are unable to pass the BM after pushing for 10 minutes.
- The BM is very hard when it finally comes out.
- Some causes of constipation are:
  - Not eating enough fiber
  - Eating and drinking too many milk products
  - Waiting too long to go to the bathroom (holding poops in)

**What can you do to help a child with constipation?**

- Increase the fiber in your child's diet by offering more fruits, vegetables, and bran (flake cereal).
- Drink more water and other liquids.
- Encourage your child to be more active (walking, running and playing).
- Talk to your doctor before trying any medicines like laxatives or stool softeners.

## The Facts:

Abdominal pain ("belly pain" or "stomach ache") in children is common and can have many different causes. The pain often goes away by its own in just a couple of hours. Usually stomach aches are caused by simple things:

- Gas pains
- Eating too much
- Stress and worry
- Constipation: holding in bowel movements (poops)
- Indigestion: not being able to process food

Other possible causes of belly pain may depend on the age of the child.