

Emergency Services

Abdominal Pain - Caring for Yourself at Home

Your abdomen extends from below your chest to your groin. Some people call it the stomach, but your abdomen contains many other important organs. Pain in the abdomen can come from any one of these organs. The pain may start somewhere else, such as your chest. Severe pain does not always mean it is a serious problem. However, mild pain does not always mean the problem is not serious.

Make an appointment to see your family doctor or visit a health clinic within the next 7 days.

How to take care of yourself at home

- Rest until you feel better.
- Take your temperature every four (4) hours over the next 12 hours.
- Take any medicines the Emergency doctor has told you to take.
- Drink clear fluids such as water, tea, or clear soup broth for the first 24 hours. You can also drink sports drinks. Aim for at least 8 glasses of water a day.
- Once your pain is gone, eat bland foods such as rice, cooked cereals, bread, cracker, plain baked potatoes, or apple sauce.
- Do not eat spicy foods, bran, candy, or milk products.
- Do not drink alcohol, milk, or any drinks with caffeine (coffee, cola, etc.).

Go to the nearest Emergency Department if:

- 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).
- You have a fever over 38.5°C (101.3F).
- You are having 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 - Caring for Yourself at Home - *continued*

To learn more, it's good to ask:

- Your family doctor
- HealthLinkBC - call 8-1-1 (7-1-1 for deaf and hard of hearing) or go online at www.HealthLinkBC.ca