

# Paediatric Abdominal Pain Advice Sheet

Advice for Parents and Carers



**RED**

**If your child:**

- Becomes pale and floppy
- Cold hands and feet
- Becomes drowsy or difficult to wake
- Green or blood stained vomit

- Excruciating pain despite pain relief such as paracetamol or ibuprofen
- Testicular pain in a boy (especially in teenage boys)
- Black tarry stools or redcurrant jelly-like stools

**Your child needs urgent help** Please phone 999 or go to the nearest hospital



**AMBER**

**If your child:**

- Swollen tummy
- Blood in your child's poo or wee
- Constant dull pain lasting more than 1 day despite pain relief
- Fever or symptoms continuing for more than 5 days

- Increased thirstiness
- Weeing more or less than normal yellow skin or eyes
- Weight loss/ faltering growth

**You need to contact a doctor or nurse today**

Please ring your GP surgery or call NHS 111 for advice



**GREEN**

**If your child:**

- Is alert and interacts with you
- Diarrhoea & vomiting but no red or amber signs
- Pain associated with menstruation in a girl
- Recurrent constipation

**Self-Care**

Continue providing your child's care at home. If you are still concerned about your child, call NHS 111 for advice

**Self-Care:** should include ensuring your child has regular food and drink (clear fluids, such as water or juice) and regular pain relief (paracetamol/ ibuprofen should be given as per manufacturers instructions).

**Some Useful Numbers** (you may want to add some numbers on here too)



**GP Practice Phone Number**

---

**NHS 111 – Dial 111**  
Free from landlines and mobiles  
24 hours a day  
365 days a year

---



---

## About Abdominal pain in children

- There are many health problems that can cause stomach pain for children, including:
- Bowel (gut) problems – constipation, colic or irritable bowel
- Infections – gastroenteritis, kidney or bladder infections, or infections in other parts of the body like the ear or chest
- Food-related problems – too much food, food poisoning or food allergies
- Problems outside the abdomen – muscle strain or migraine
- Surgical problems – appendicitis, bowel obstruction or intussusception (telescoping of part of the gut). Suspect appendicitis if pain low on the right side, walks bent over, won't hop or jump, and prefers to lie still.
- Period pain – some girls can have pain before their periods start
- Poisoning – such as eating soap or smoking
- The most common cause of recurrent stomach aches is stress. Over 10% of children have them. The pain occurs in the pit of the stomach or near the belly button. The pain is mild but real.

## How can I look after my child?

- Reassure the child and try to help them rest
- If they are not being sick, try giving them paediatric paracetamol oral suspension. Avoid giving aspirin
- Help your child drink plenty of clear fluids such as water or juice
- Do not push your child to eat if they feel unwell. If your child is hungry, offer bland food such as crackers, rice, bananas or toast.
- Place a gently heated wheat bag on your child's tummy or run a warm bath for them.

## After Care

- Many children with stomach pain get better in hours or days without special treatment and often no cause can be found
- Sometimes the cause becomes more obvious with time and treatment can be started
- If pain or other problems persist, see your doctor.