



Abdominal pain

You came to the emergency department with pain in your belly. The doctor examined you and did the tests needed today. We found no sign of a serious problem that needs you to stay in hospital. This sheet explains how to look after yourself at home.

What is it?

Belly pain has many causes, such as a stomach bug, trapped wind, constipation, period pain or a urine infection. Often no clear cause is found, and the pain settles by itself within a few days. Sometimes an early problem, such as appendicitis, only shows itself later. That is why it is important to watch for the warning signs below.

Looking after yourself at home

- Rest, and take small sips of water or clear fluids often.
- Eat small, plain meals when you feel ready. Avoid fatty, spicy food and alcohol.
- A warm (not hot) pack on your belly may ease cramping.
- Keep a note of the pain: where it is, how bad, and whether it is getting better or worse.
- Do not drive or make big decisions if the pain or any medicine makes you drowsy.

Medicines

- Paracetamol can help the pain, unless your doctor told you not to. Follow the packet or your doctor's instructions.
- Do not take strong painkillers you have at home unless a doctor has told you to. They can hide worsening signs.
- If you were given a prescription, take it exactly as the label says.

Follow-up

- See your family doctor or health centre within 1 to 2 days if the pain has not gone.
- Go back sooner if the pain changes, or if you are not getting better as expected.
- Take this sheet and any test results with you.

Come back to the emergency department or call an ambulance straight away if:

- Severe or steadily worsening abdominal pain
- Constant vomiting, or you cannot keep any fluids down
- Black or bloody stools, or vomiting blood
- A hard, swollen belly, or fever with the pain
- You faint, or feel very dizzy or confused
- You are or might be pregnant and have pain with bleeding



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This leaflet is general information to support the advice your doctor or nurse gave you today. It does not replace their advice. If you are worried, seek medical help.

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