



What is it?

Stomach aches are very common in children and there are many causes. Most stomach aches are not due to a serious illness and children often get better on their own. Pain can arise from any structure in the abdomen – the stomach, bowel, kidneys, bladder and other organs. Some children get abdominal pain as a result of stress.

What are the symptoms?

Stomach ache can happen suddenly or develop slowly. Severe pain does not always mean your child is suffering from a serious illness. Severe pain can be associated with mild illnesses such as wind pain from drinking too much fizzy drink, eating too much or cramping from viral gastroenteritis. Also, some serious illnesses start with relatively mild stomach ache.

Your infant or young child may cry and draw their knees up towards their chest when experiencing stomach ache. Your child may also have other symptoms that are associated with the cause of the stomach ache such as vomiting.

When should you contact your local doctor immediately?

- The pain is severe and persists for a prolonged period (eg over several hours).
- The pain returns frequently and regularly.
- Your child also has a high fever.

- Your child also has a rash or appears very pale.
- Your child has persistent vomiting or vomit that is green or contains blood.
- Your child has blood in their poo, or has black poo.
- Your child is very tired or drowsy.
- Your child has pain elsewhere.
- Your child has swelling of the abdomen or lumps in the groin.
- Your child has pain when they pass urine or has blood in their urine.
- If an abdominal injury has occurred recently.
- If there is pain in the scrotum or testicle or the groin area in boys.
- Or if your child does not seem to be getting better.

What can you do for your child at home?

- See if your child will lie down & rest.
- Encourage your child to drink plenty of clear fluids, with small amounts frequently.
- If they don't want to eat don't force them.
- Encourage your child to sit on the toilet; doing a poo may help the pain.
- Do not give your child any medications without first talking to your doctor.

Fact Sheet

Abdominal Pain (Stomach Ache)



Remember

- Encourage plenty of clear fluids and do not force your child to eat.
- Do not give your child any medications without first talking to your doctor.
- Contact your local doctor immediately if you are concerned.

This fact sheet is for education purposes only.
Please consult with your doctor or other health professional to make sure this information is right for your child. *This document was reviewed on Tuesday, 30th September 2008.*

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