

# Abdominal Pain

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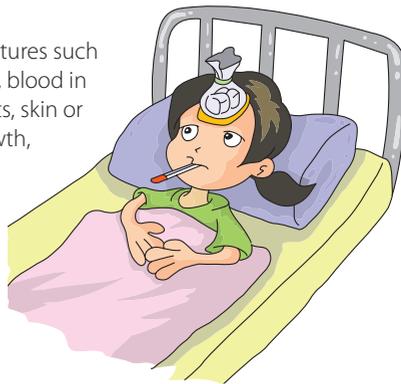
“Stomach pain” is the common term for abdominal pain. Abdominal pain is not a disease by itself, but a term used to describe a symptom. Causes include food intolerance, gastroenteritis (inflammation of the stomach and intestines), food poisoning, urinary tract infection, appendicitis (inflammation of the appendix) and constipation.



## Watch Out For...

Bring your child to the doctor if you notice the following in him:

- ▶ The pain is severe, recurrent, or persistent.
- ▶ The pain is severe enough to wake your child up at night.
- ▶ The pain gets worse and stops your child from eating or moving.
- ▶ Your child's abdomen is swollen and tender.
- ▶ Pain that is present in one specific location such as on the right side of the abdomen and does not go away.
- ▶ The pain is associated with inability to urinate, move his bowels, or pass gas.
- ▶ Pain on urinating.
- ▶ There are accompanying features such as fever, diarrhoea, vomiting, blood in stools, inflammation (of joints, skin or eyes), weight loss, poor growth, anaemia, jaundice (yellow skin/eyes), swelling around the anus, recurrent mouth ulcers and swelling in groin that grows larger and changes in colour.



## What to Do

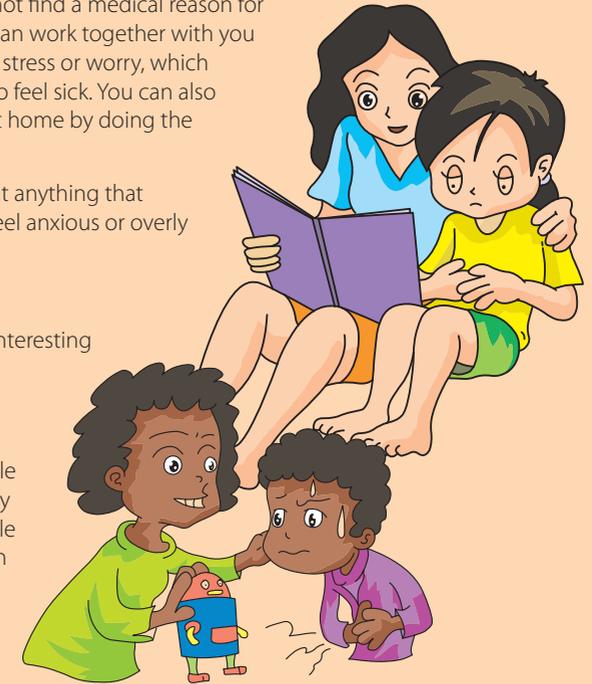
- ▶ Help your child get some rest if he has a mild abdominal pain.
- ▶ Seek medical help if the pain does not go away after several hours.
- ▶ Do not give your child any medicines without consulting the doctor first.

## Stress Could Cause Recurrent Abdominal Pain

Studies of recurrent abdominal pain in childhood showed that in over 95% of cases, there are no underlying diseases. This does not mean that the pain is not real, or made up. In cases where medical causes for the pain are not found, it suggests that the pain could be largely caused by stress, anxiety or depression.

Therefore, if the doctor cannot find a medical reason for your child's pain, he or she can work together with you to find other factors such as stress or worry, which may be causing your child to feel sick. You can also help your child feel better at home by doing the following:

- ▶ Talk with your child about anything that may be causing him to feel anxious or overly stressed.
- ▶ Listen to his worries.
- ▶ Distract your child with interesting activities such as reading or playing toys.
- ▶ If your child's pain does not improve, it is advisable to seek medical help early as there are many possible causes of abdominal pain and it is important not to miss an underlying disease.



**Reminder: Do not give your child over-the-counter medications for the pain, unless prescribed by the doctor.**