

# Peritonitis

## Definition

- Peritonitis is an inflammation of the peritoneum, the thin tissue that lines the inner wall of the abdomen and covers most of the abdominal organs.

## Classification

- May be classified due to its extent (Local or General) or its aetiology (Primary or Secondary)

### Generalised

#### Primary

Infection of peritoneal fluid without intra-abdominal disease:

- Haematogenous spread
- Lymphatic spread
- Direct spread (Usually from peritoneal dialysis catheters)
- Ascending infection: from the female genital tract

#### Secondary

Inflammation of the peritoneum arising from an intra-abdominal source

- Infectious
- Non - Infectious

Blood Ischaemia Bile Chemical Foreign Body

- Perforation

### Localised

- Usually as a result of spreading inflammation across the wall of an intra-abdominal viscus

## Clinical Features

- Variable
- Most common is abdominal pain, which is constant and often described as sharp
- Pain is well localised if it secondary to inflammation of a viscus

## Examination

- Guarding
- Rebound Tenderness
- Rigidity