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## Bezoar

A bezoar is a ball of swallowed foreign material most often composed of hair or fiber. It collects in the stomach and fails to pass through the intestines.

### Causes

Chewing on or eating hair or fuzzy materials (or indigestible materials such as plastic bags) can lead to the formation of a bezoar. The rate is very low. The risk is greater among people with intellectual disability or emotionally disturbed children. Generally, bezoars are mostly seen in females aged 10 to 19 years.

### Symptoms

Symptoms may include:

- Indigestion
- Stomach upset or distress
- Nausea and vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Pain
- Gastric ulcers

### Exams and Tests

The child may have a lump in the abdomen that can be felt by the health care provider. A barium swallow x-ray will show the mass in the stomach. Sometimes, a scope is used (endoscopy) to directly view the bezoar in the stomach.

### Treatment

The bezoar may need to be surgically removed, especially if it is large. In some cases, small bezoars may be removed through a scope placed through the mouth into the stomach. This is similar to an EGD (esophagogastroduodenoscopy) procedure.

### Outlook (Prognosis)

Full recovery is expected.

# Possible Complications

Persistent vomiting can lead to dehydration.

## When to Contact a Medical Professional

Contact your provider if you suspect your child has a bezoar.

## Prevention

If your child has had a hair bezoar in the past, trim the child's hair short so they cannot put the ends in the mouth. Keep indigestible materials away from a child who has a tendency to put items in the mouth.

Be sure to remove the child's access to fuzzy or fiber-filled materials.

## Alternative Names

Trichobezoar; Hairball

## References

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## Review Date 8/5/2023

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06/01/2028

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