

**San Joaquin County
Emergency Medical Services Agency**



BLS Abdominal Emergencies

AUTHORITY: Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5, Sections 1797.60, 1797.80, 1797.197, 1797.197a, 1797.204, 1797.220, 1798; California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Chapter 2, Sections 100062, 100063, 100064

INFORMATION NEEDED:

Discomfort: location, quality, severity, onset of symptoms, duration, aggravation, alleviation.
Associated symptoms – nausea, emesis, diarrhea, fever, diaphoresis, vertigo, “heart burn”.
Gastro-intestinal – time and description of last meal, time of last bowel movement, signs of blood in stool.

Gynecological: date of last menstrual period, possible pregnancy, history of vaginal bleeding.

Medical history: surgery, related diagnosis (infection, hepatitis, stones, etc.), medication (OTC and prescribed), self administered remedies (baking soda, Epsom salts, enemas).

OBJECTIVE FINDINGS:

General appearance – level of distress, skin color, diaphoresis.

Abdominal tenderness – guarding, rigidity, distention, rebound.

Pulsating masses (aneurysm).

Quality of femoral pulses.

TREATMENT:

1. Primary Survey – ensure ABC's.
2. Place patient in position of comfort or supine with legs elevated if patient is hypotensive.
3. Monitor SpO₂.
4. Administer oxygen for shortness of breath or signs of hypoxia: Oxygen 10-15 L/min via non-rebreathing mask. Patients with ineffective respirations: support ventilations with BVM and airway.
5. Give patient nothing by mouth.
6. Confirm ambulance transport is responding.
7. Secondary Survey and Routine Medical Care.

Note: Completion of a thorough secondary exam and patient history are essential to identify potential cardiac involvement or early signs of shock.