

## Abdominal Pain in Children

Tummy aches are one of the most frequently complained about problems in children. There are many causes attributed with it, and it is a challenge for the parent or the physician to find out the exact problem. Sometimes the pain requires immediate attention and can also be a case of emergency. The causes can be related to food, infections, poisoning, insect bites, etc.

Bacteria and viruses are responsible in case of abdominal pain due to infections. Gastroenteritis and stomach flu are some of the examples of infections that can cause stomach aches. Gastroenteritis is the inflammation and irritation of stomach and the gastrointestinal passage. Extra care must be taken by travelers, as the food and drinks can be contaminated at new locations and can lead to traveler's getting diarrhea. Stomach pain due to viral infections ward off quickly, but bacterial infections demand the intake of antibiotics. In both the cases, some children recover very fast by vomiting and excreting. In case of diarrhea, excess drinking fluids should be given to the kid to avoid dehydration.

Food related stomach aches can be caused because of food poisoning, gas production, excess food ingestion and food allergies. Problems because of food poisoning are temporary and can cause bloating. Symptoms of food poisoning are vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramps, and nausea. Usually these symptoms surface within two days of consumption of contaminated food. Depending on the severity chill, fever, bloody stools, or damage to the nervous system can follow. In case of a group of people who consumed the contaminated food, this situation is known as an outbreak. Over two hundred diseases are known to be transmitted via food. Food can be poisoned because of toxic agents or infective agents. Infective agents are parasites, bacteria, and viruses. Toxic agents are uncooked food, exotic foods, and poisonous mushrooms. Food can get contaminated because of handling by unclean workers at the local restaurant, too. Parents should check out the cleanliness and should visit a trusted restaurant.

Particular foods can cause the irritation, such as dairy products can cause lactose intolerance. If this is the case, the child is allergic to certain food or drinks and swallowing even a small amount can cause vomiting, nausea, diarrhea, cramping, and skin rash. Since these items are harmless otherwise, such kind of allergic reactions are known as hypersensitivity reaction. Sometimes the symptoms can be life threatening and are known as anaphylactic shock or anaphylaxis.

Poisoning can also be due to overdose of medicines and even due to eating non-food stuffs. Insect bites such as black widow spider bite can also lead to pain

in the abdomen. It can be accompanied with muscle cramps, weakness, nausea, tremor, vomiting and in severe case it can cause dizziness, faintness, respiratory problems, and chest pain. Also, the heart rate and blood pressure increases.

In very rare cases, abdominal pain can be due to appendicitis. This is a result of blockage and inflammation of tissues. Young kids have a higher rate if complications are considered and should be immediately rushed to the hospital. The pain starts slowly in the abdomen, specifically near the belly button. The pain shifts slowly to the right side of the lower abdomen within a time period of over twenty four hours. Clear symptoms are abdominal pain, vomiting, nausea, fever and loss of appetite. Diabetes can also be a reason of abdominal pain. Small children usually curl up, cry and express pain through facial expression. Some kids will be reluctant to talk, but the parent should try to get clear explanation of the problem. Along with close monitoring of the symptoms, studying the location of pain, pain duration, nature of vomiting, and urinary problems will help. After that a pediatric should be consulted who can further refer to a gastroenterologist. Until help is reached, the child should be made to relax.

Often, lying with face in downward direction can relieve pain due to gas. Incase of vomiting and diarrhea, fluids should be given constantly. Solid food should only be given when the child is comfortable about eating it.

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Word Count 680