



Patient Presentation

Abdominal pain, also known as a stomach ache, refers to a pain in the area of the abdomen. It can be a symptom associated with both non-serious and serious medical issues.

It is important to remember that pathology originating in the abdomen may be perceived as pain elsewhere.



Abdominal Pain (paediatric)

Quick Reference Guide

Access the [full KPP](#) for further information

‘Red Flag’ Signs & Symptoms

Does the patient present with the following?

- [Weight loss](#)
- Slow linear growth ([faltering growth](#))
- [Gastrointestinal blood loss](#)
- Persistent or bilious [vomiting](#), [haematemesis](#)
- Chronic [diarrhoea](#)
- Unexplained [fever](#) or abnormal vital signs
- Signs of acute abdomen (eg, guarding / peritonism)
- Perianal or oral abnormalities
- [Abdominal distension](#)
- Significant dehydration
- Hepatomegaly / splenomegaly
- Perianal abnormalities

Investigations

- Urine analysis as initial laboratory study
- Microbiology tests (if infection suspected)
- Full blood count, electrolytes, C-reactive protein (CRP) and liver function tests
- Coeliac disease screen
- Amylase test, if acute abdomen
- Pregnancy test for young women

If surgical / acute abdomen is suspected, refer urgently to Specialist Practitioner

Treatment Approach

- Treat the underlying cause appropriately as treatment varies depending on the cause identified, for example:
 - [Constipation](#) (eg, laxatives)
 - Antibiotics for diagnosed urinary tract infection
- Organic causes for chronic abdominal pain (eg, inflammatory bowel disease, coeliac disease) should be treated as diagnosed

Surgical referral may be needed in suspected cases

Consider escalation of care to the Emergency Department or Specialist Practitioner if required

Follow local protocols



Safety Netting Advice

Seek medical attention if:

- ‘Red Flag’ signs or symptoms develop or if patient deteriorates or is not improving in expected fashion



Resources

Further information for the public:

- [NICE clinical guideline CG99](#)
- [NICE clinical guideline CG84](#)
- [NICE clinical guideline CG54](#)
- [NICE guideline NG1](#)
- [Stomach ache and abdominal pain](#), the NHS website
- [Functional Abdominal Pain](#), GI kids



Related KPPs

- [Abdominal Distension](#)
- [Acute Surgical Abdomen](#)
- [Drug Overdose & Poisoning](#)
- [Vomiting](#)
- [Weight Loss](#)