

Abdominal Pain in Women

One of the most common reasons women visit emergency rooms is sudden and severe abdominal pain. This is known as acute pain.

It can be a challenge to deal with because there are so many possible causes.

“Sources of abdominal pain can come from several places in women such as their kidneys, ovaries, uterus. And it can be something as simple as a urinary tract infection, menstrual cramps or a pulled muscle or it can be something more severe such as an appendicitis, or heart attack.”

To determine the cause, your health care provider will examine you and ask you questions about the pain.

These include:

What does the pain feel like? Sharp, dull, cramping, burning?

Where is it?

What triggers it?

How long has it lasted?

Is it getting better, worse, or staying the same?

Has it spread?

Do you have any other symptoms?

“Several questions that we’ll ask a woman who comes in with abdominal pain include their pregnancy history; their medication use; their last menstrual period; if they’ve traveled anywhere; and if they have any family history of abdominal problems.”

Tests of the blood, urine or stool may be done, along with imaging tests that take pictures of the inside of your body.

In some cases, a test called an endoscopy may be ordered, in which a flexible tube with a camera on the end is inserted into the body to allow doctors to examine the stomach and other abdominal organs.

As for what you can do, get plenty of rest. Drink lots of fluids to stay hydrated.

Eat smaller meals or snacks throughout the day instead of three big ones.

And choose foods that are not high in fiber and are easy to tolerate.

Some pain relievers can aggravate abdominal pain. Ask your provider which medicines are okay for you to take.

See your provider right away if you have severe abdominal pain, fever, bloody stools, abnormal vaginal bleeding, persistent nausea or vomiting, or yellow skin.

“Most abdominal pain will kind of go away on its own within several days. However, if your symptoms get worse or they don’t go away, then it’s time to go back to your doctor to see them about the problems.”