



Health Corner

Courtesy of the University Academy Wellness Center

CLINIC HOURS

8:00 - 4:00

816- 412-5978

Stomachaches

spring
2019

What's a Stomachache?

You wake up in the middle of the night with stomach cramps, clutch a pillow and curl your body around it. That helps a little and you go back to sleep. But in the morning, the pain is still there. "Ouch, I have a stomachache!" you tell your mom or dad.

Why Does Belly Pain Happen?

Pain is the body's way of telling us that something's going on. Belly pain alerts us to something that's happening inside us that we might not know about otherwise.

Here are some of the things that cause tum tummy troubles:

- **Constipation** is a top reason kids get belly pain. If you haven't had a bowel movement (poop) for a while or if it hurts to go to the bathroom or your bowel movements are hard, you are probably constipated.
- **Diarrhea** is often caused by an infection that some people call "the stomach flu." When you have diarrhea — runny, watery bowel movements — you may also feel sick to your stomach. The pain is one way your body tells you to stay near a bathroom!
- **Other belly troubles.** Belly pain also can happen with a urinary tract infection or a blocked intestine. Infection by bacteria or a parasite, heartburn, irritable bowel disease, or inflammatory bowel disease also can cause it.
- **Something you eat.** Some kids get belly pain because they ate too much of something, a food that was too spicy or greasy, or food that sat around in the fridge for too long and went bad.
- **Food intolerance or food allergy.** Some people have foods that are hard for them to digest. This is called a **food intolerance**. For example, people with lactose intolerance have a tough time digesting lactose, a type of sugar found in milk and other dairy foods. A **food allergy** is different, and some can be very serious. Food allergies can cause immune system reactions that can harm the body. Someone with a food allergy must always avoid that food.
- **Appendicitis.** If the pain starts by your belly button and then moves to the lower right side of your belly, it might be appendicitis. Fever or vomiting, along with pain that gets worse and worse and a loss of appetite, also can be signs of appendicitis.
- **An infection someplace else** in your body may cause belly pain too. A sore throat, pneumonia, an ear infection, or a cough can sometimes cause tummy trouble.
- **Stress.** Many, many kids (and adults, too) have a "nervous stomach" when they are worried or stressed.

How Do Doctors Find the Cause of a Bellyache?

Your doctor will first ask you some questions, examine you, and maybe do some tests. Your doctor may suggest you take some medicine or might give you special instructions for eating to help your body heal the bellyache.

If it turns out that you have appendicitis, you will need an operation called an appendectomy (say: app-en-DEK-tuh-mee).

If stress is behind your stomach problems, your doctor may recommend a specialist, such as a psychologist. These experts can help kids figure out the source of the stress and help them come up with some ideas for how to fix the problems or handle them better.

How Can I Prevent Belly Pain?

If you'd like to prevent bellyaches, here are some good tips to follow:

- Don't overeat.
- Eat fiber-rich foods, such as fruits and vegetables, so your bowel movements are regular.
- Drink lots of fluids, especially water.

Wash your hands before eating.

- Don't eat right before bedtime.

Get lots of sleep so your body doesn't get run down.

If you have a bellyache, be sure to let an adult know what's going on!

Reviewed by: Elana Pearl Ben-Joseph, MD

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<https://kidshealth.org/ChildrensMercy/en/kids/abdominal-pain.html?view=ptr&WT.ac=k-ptr>

Goodbye and good luck to all the University Academy seniors! It has been a pleasure being a part of your school experience and health education. Stop by the clinic if you need a copy of your immunization record or have any questions.



The Wellness Center is open year round!!! Please call over the summer for clinic hours and appointments. 816-412-5978.

Common clinic services provided: sports physicals, asthma, respiratory illnesses, rashes/skin problems, minor illnesses/injuries, menstrual problems, school/family issues, referrals from school nurse.