

Abdominal Pain – Advice for Parents / Carers

Children's Services
Women & Children's Services

This leaflet has been designed to give you important information about your condition / procedure, and to answer some common queries that you may have.



Together 
we care, we respect, we deliver

Information for patients and visitors

What are the common causes of abdominal pain in children?

- Constipation (which is caused by not having their bowels opened on a regular basis)
- Urinary tract infection (an infection in their urine (wee))
- Gastro-enteritis (stomach bug). This may cause diarrhoea & vomiting
- Appendicitis – inflammation of the appendix
- Mesenteric Adenitis (inflammation of some of the lymph nodes in the abdomen)
- Gynaecological problems in teenage girls (e.g. period pains)

What will happen when my child is admitted to hospital?

Your child will initially be reviewed by either a doctor or an Advanced Paediatric Nurse Practitioner (APNP).

Until this review has taken place nursing staff may advise that your child should have nothing to eat or drink. Having nothing to eat or drink can assist staff in making a diagnosis. In addition if the cause for your child's abdominal pain is surgical (i.e. appendicitis) they may need to go to theatre. Having nothing to eat or drink may help them go to theatre sooner.

As there can be a number of causes for abdominal pain some or all of the following tests may be carried out:

- Urine sample. The sample will be tested for any signs of infection. Nursing staff will explain how to collect a sample from younger children

- Blood sample. This will be tested for signs of infection
- If a blood sample is needed a cannula (small plastic tube) may be inserted into a vein. Cream / spray may be applied to numb the area prior to the cannula being inserted
- An abdominal X-ray. This is usually done on the same day in the X-ray department
- An ultrasound scan of the abdomen. This is more in depth than an abdominal X-ray. The scan is done in the X-ray Department. Depending upon the urgency of the scan, it can take up to 48 / 72 hours for this to be carried out. Nursing staff will keep you informed of when the scan will be done
- If your child is dehydrated they may also need to have fluids by intravenous infusion (sometimes called a drip)
- Females over the age of 12 may be asked to complete a pregnancy test

Consent

When a patient requires an operation the Trust usually require written consent (i.e. a signature) for an operation to take place. This is usually obtained once the operation has been explained to the patient / parent or the person who has parental responsibility. The explanation should include the intended benefits and any known risks including side effects and complications.

When operating on children we usually ask for the parent or someone with parental responsibility to sign the consent form. However in some cases, for example if the child is around 15 / 16 years of age and deemed to competent by nursing and



Together 
we care, we respect, we deliver



Information for patients and visitors

surgical / medical staff, the child themselves may be able to sign the consent form.

Please note however in emergency situations if your child is admitted and has a life threatening condition that requires an emergency operation / procedure the Trust may proceed without obtaining written consent.

We do request therefore where possible, that a parent or person with parental responsibility remains on the ward until their child has been seen by the doctor in case consent is required.

If you have any questions regarding consent please do not hesitate to speak to a member of staff.

What happens when the results of any tests are known?

If the cause of your child's abdominal pain is considered to be surgical, i.e. appendicitis nursing staff will arrange for one of the surgical doctors to come and see your child.

Depending on your child's condition or diagnosis (reason for their abdominal pain) the surgical doctor may arrange further investigations or for your child to have an operation. This will be explained to you by the doctor.

If the cause for your child's abdominal pain is considered to be medical (i.e. constipation / a stomach bug) your child will be seen by medical doctors who will decide on further tests if necessary and / or treatment.

How long will my child need to stay in hospital?

This can vary depending on the diagnosis and treatment.

You will be kept updated on your child's progress, investigations and treatment by doctors and nursing staff.

If you have any concerns or wish to discuss any aspect of your child's care please speak to either a doctor or a member of nursing staff.

Will my child need to see the doctor again after they are discharged?

This will depend on your child's diagnosis and/or treatment. If your child does need to see a doctor again the nurse will let you know when they are discharged from hospital.

Occasionally your child may not need to see the doctor again, but we may offer the support of the Children's Community Nursing Team. They are able to offer further advice and support if necessary.

What are the benefits of my child being admitted?

When your child is admitted staff can review your child and their symptoms on a regular basis. If necessary they will also be able to arrange tests and / or treatment.

What are the risks to my child?

If the cause of your child's abdominal pain is not investigated and where necessary treated, the pain suffered by your child may not go away on its own and may cause other problems.

Are there any alternatives?

In order to find the cause of your child's abdominal pain it is necessary for a doctor to examine your child and where appropriate arrange for tests to be carried out to obtain a diagnosis.



Together 
we care, we respect, we deliver



Information for patients and visitors

Contact details within the Trust for patients to obtain additional information

Grimsby

Rainforest Ward,
Diana Princess of Wales Hospital,
Grimsby

Tel: 01472 874111 extension 7520

Children's Services Community Nursing
Team – Grimsby

Tel: 01472 874111 extension 7559

Scunthorpe

Disney Ward,
Scunthorpe General Hospital,
Scunthorpe

Tel: 01724 290139

Children's Services Community Nursing
Team – Scunthorpe

Tel: 01724 282282 extension 2425

References

http://www.emedicinehealth.com/abdominal_pain_in_children/article_em.htm

Concerns and Queries

If you have any concerns / queries about any of the services offered by the Trust, in the first instance, please speak to the person providing your care.

For Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital

Alternatively you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on (01472) 875403 or at the PALS office which is situated near the main entrance.

For Scunthorpe General Hospital

Alternatively you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on (01724) 290132 or at the PALS office which is situated on C Floor.

Alternatively you can email:
nlg-tr.PALS@nhs.net

Confidentiality

Information on NHS patients is collected in a variety of ways and for a variety of reasons (e.g. providing care and treatment, managing and planning the NHS, training and educating staff, research etc.).

Everyone working for the NHS has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential. Information will only ever be shared with people who have a genuine need for it (e.g. your GP or other professionals from whom you have been receiving care) or if the law requires it, for example, to notify a birth.

Please be assured however that anyone who receives information from us is also under a legal duty to keep it confidential.

Zero Tolerance - Violent, Threatening and Abusive Behaviour

The Trust and its staff are committed to providing high quality care to patients within the department. However, we wish to advise all patients / visitors that the following inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated:

- Swearing
- Threatening / abusive behaviour
- Verbal / physical abuse

The Trust reserves the right to withdraw from treating patients whom are threatening /



Together 
we care, we respect, we deliver



Information for patients and visitors

abusive / violent and ensuring the removal of those persons from the premises.

All acts of criminal violence and aggression will be notified to the Police immediately.

Risk Management Strategy

The Trust welcomes comments and suggestions from patients and visitors that could help to reduce risk.

Perhaps you have experienced something whilst in hospital, whilst attending as an outpatient or as a visitor and you felt at risk.

Please tell a member of staff on the ward or in the department you are attending / visiting.

Moving & Handling

The Trust operates a Minimal Lifting Policy, which in essence means patients are only ever lifted by nursing staff in an emergency situation.

Patients are always encouraged to help themselves as much as possible when mobilising, and if unable to do so, equipment may be used to assist in their safe transfer.

If you have any questions regarding moving and handling of patients within the Trust, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department you are visiting.

Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust

Diana Princess of Wales Hospital
Scartho Road
Grimsby
01472 874111

Scunthorpe General Hospital
Cliff Gardens
Scunthorpe
01724 282282

Goole & District Hospital
Woodland Avenue

Goole
01405 720720

www.nlg.nhs.uk

Date of issue: August, 2015

Review Period: August, 2018

Author: Children's Services Governance

IFP-340 v4.1

© NLGFT 2015



Together 
we care, we respect, we deliver

