

# Abdominal Pain – Advice for Young Persons

**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 (such as period pains)

### What will happen when I am admitted to hospital?

You 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 you 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 the abdominal pain is surgical (i.e. appendicitis) you may need to go to theatre for an operation. Having nothing to eat or drink may help you 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
- 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 you are dehydrated you 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 under the age of 16 we usually ask for your parent or someone with parental responsibility to sign the consent form and therefore they should remain on the ward with you until you have been seen by a doctor. However in some cases, for example if you are around 15 / 16 years of age and deemed to be competent by nursing and surgical / medical staff, you may be able to sign the consent form.



**Together**  
we care, we respect, we deliver



## Information for patients and visitors

---

Please note however in emergency situations if you require an emergency operation / procedure the Trust may proceed without obtaining written consent.

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 abdominal pain is considered to be surgical, i.e. appendicitis nursing staff will arrange for one of the surgical doctors to come and see you.

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

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

### **How long will I need to stay in hospital?**

This can vary depending on the diagnosis and treatment.

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

If you have any concerns or wish to discuss any aspect of your care please speak to your parent / carer, a doctor or a member of nursing staff.

### **Will I need to see the doctor again after I am discharged?**

This will depend on your diagnosis and / or treatment. If you do need to see a doctor again the nurse will let you and your parent / carer know when you are discharged from hospital.

Occasionally you 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 being admitted?**

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

### **What are the risks?**

If the cause of your abdominal pain is not investigated and where necessary treated, the pain you are suffering may not go away on its own and may cause other problems.

### **Are there any alternatives?**

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



## 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](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](mailto:nlg-tr.PALS@nhs.net)

#### 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](http://www.nlg.nhs.uk)

Date of issue: February, 2016

Review Period: February, 2019

Author: Head of Children's Nursing  
IFP-347 v4.1

© NLGFT 2016



**Together**   
we care, we respect, we deliver

