



Student Health Center

UNC Wilmington

INSTRUCTION SHEET: ABDOMINAL PAIN

The Student Health Provider has evaluated you today for abdominal pain. The provider did not find a cause of abdominal pain which needs surgery or admission to the hospital. Further evaluation, appointments, and tests may be necessary. A definite diagnosis of abdominal pain is often not possible initially — an exact cause is not found on more than half of all initial visits for abdominal pain.

The main job of the Student Health Provider and staff is to look for serious, life-threatening causes of pain. Again, for now, signs of a serious problem are not present. Be aware, though, that your condition could change over the next hours or day: If you worsen, prompt reevaluation by a doctor is essential!

MEASURES YOU SHOULD TAKE TO HELP TREAT YOUR ABDOMINAL PAIN:

- 1- Rest at home.
- 2- Take only clear liquids by mouth until you are greatly improved. Clear liquids (drinks free of solid particles) include: water, juices, sports drinks, and soft drinks. When you are better, gradually resume a normal diet.
- 3- Acetaminophen (Tylenol and others) is a safe over-the-counter medicine to take for abdominal pain.
- 4- **MOST IMPORTANTLY, IF YOUR CONDITION WORSENS, GO IMMEDIATELY TO THE NEAREST EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT FOR REEVALUATION!** Specifically, seek care for: increasing pain, pain worsening and localizing to one area of the abdomen, repeated vomiting, blood in vomit/stool/urine, continuing high fever and chills, or black tarry stools (a possible sign of blood in the stool). You should also seek prompt care with your personal/referral doctor or Student Health for: continuing mild symptoms, eyes or skin turning yellow, or urine becoming tea-colored.
- 5- Even if you are improving, make a prompt follow-up visit with Student Health or your personal/referral doctor as directed. Your doctor/provider can provide ongoing care for this episode, further evaluation of the cause of the pain, and help in preventing future episodes.