

HEALTH TIPS FOR SPRING, 2011

STOMACHACHES IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN



CAUSES OF STOMACHACHES IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

- Gastroenteritis (stomach flu)
- Milk allergy
- Lactose intolerance
- Constipation – changes in diet
- Upper respiratory illness (colds)
- Intestinal (bowel) blockage
- Appendicitis
- Gas



GASTROENTERITIS (stomach flu)



- Second most common childhood illness
- Viruses are the most common cause
- Other more serious causes are bacteria (E.coli, Salmonella), and parasites (giardia)
- Symptoms may be mild or severe (vomiting, diarrhea, fever, loss of appetite and dehydration) – may need hospitalization and IV fluids
- Viruses cannot be treated with antibiotics
- Cause can be determined by a stool culture
- When the illness has subsided, the child should be introduced to a normal diet, avoiding fatty foods

MILK ALLERGY



- Milk allergy – child's immune system reacts to the proteins found in milk
- Symptoms – vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain and rashes, **shock** in rare cases
- Treatment is soy milk, however, 5 to 10% of children are also allergic to soy milk
- In that case, other foods high in calcium are recommended

LACTOSE INTOLERANCE

- The **enzyme** needed to digest lactose, the main sugar in milk is missing in the child.
- Symptoms – diarrhea, nausea, abdominal cramps, bloating and gas
- Uncommon in young children – seen in late childhood or early teens.
- Treatment – lactose free milk or over the counter supplements containing the missing **enzyme**



CONSTIPATION



- The most common cause of stomach pain
- Symptoms – no bowel movement for 2 to 3 days, then passing small hard stools
- Often caused by the addition of new foods and changes in the diet
- Treatment – increase exercise, fluids, add foods such as apricots, pears, prunes, and peas
- Avoid – bananas, carrots, rice and squash (foods which are constipating)



TREATMENT FOR CONSTIPATION



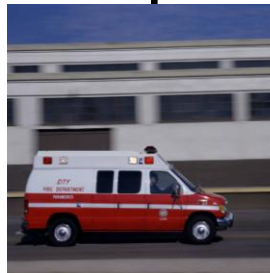
UPPER RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS (COLDS)

- Mucus that is swallowed irritates the stomach causing pain
- Children often vomit this swallowed mucus and the pain goes away
- Strep throat can also cause stomachaches and is accompanied by sore throat, fever, and headache.
- **Strep throat is a serious bacterial infection** requiring antibiotics and a visit to the pediatrician.



INTESTINAL BLOCKAGE

- The most **life threatening** condition that causes stomachaches
- It occurs suddenly – one minute the child is fine, the next he is writhing in intense pain
- The pain comes in waves is accompanied by vomiting
- This is usually caused by a condition known as intussusception and it is a surgical **emergency**
- Get the child to the hospital as quickly as possible



APPENDICITIS



- Inflammation of the appendix
- Symptoms – pain in the **right lower quadrant of the abdomen**, vomiting and fever
- Treatment – requires surgery
- **Do not apply heat** to the painful area as it can cause -----
- Complications, may include a ruptured appendix which can cause an infection of the inside of the abdomen (peritonitis)
- **This condition requires immediate medical and surgical attention.**

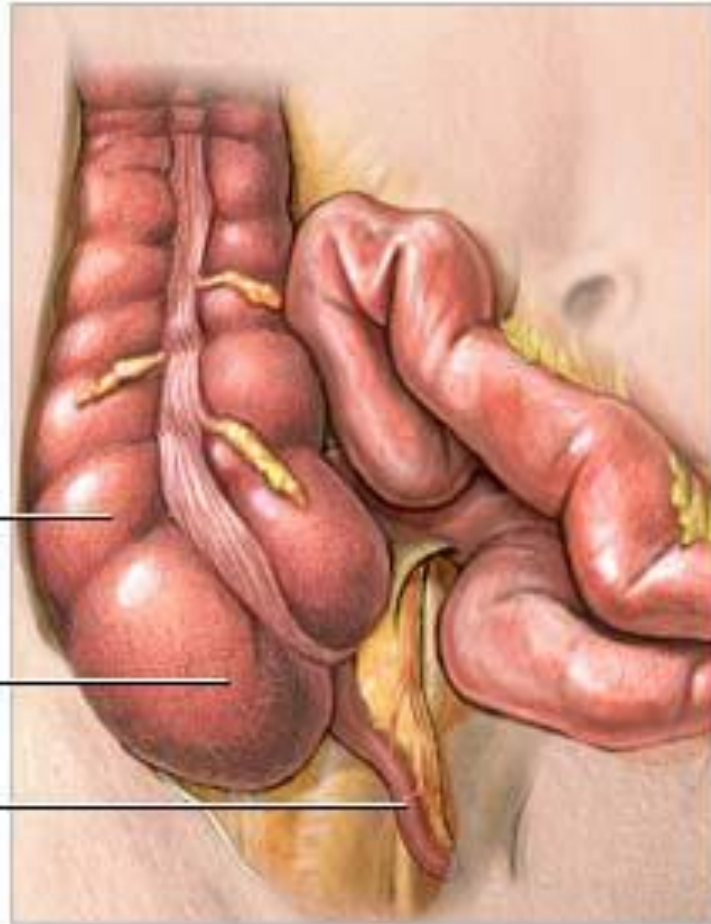
APPENDICITIS



Large
intestine

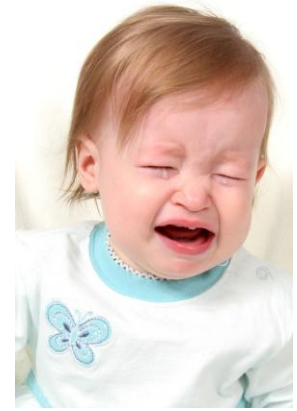
Cecum

Appendix





GAS



- May be painful especially if there are large amounts
- Can be caused by diet changes
- Many juices, especially apple and cherry contain sorbitol (glucitol), a poorly digested form of sugar
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children drink no more than $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of juice each day.

