

Abdominal and Urinary Problems

Upper Abdomen

- Heartburn
- Stomach ulcers
- Stomach ache
- Viral stomach illness

Lower Abdomen

- Appendicitis
- Constipation
- Menstrual cramps
- Urinary tract infection
- Viral stomach illness
- Sexual transmitted infection (STI)
- Vaginal or uterine infections
- Ectopic pregnancy
- Testicular torsion

If your need is urgent, and the on-campus Student Health Clinic is closed, go to the nearest hospital emergency department or call 911 for an ambulance.

Seek Immediate Medical Care through Emergency Room If:

- The pain becomes worse, or is severe
- You are pregnant or have a risk of pregnancy
- You vomit many times or your vomiting persists
- You see blood in your urine, vomit or bowel movements
- You see coffee grounds-appearing vomit; or maroon or tarry-black bowel movements
- You move your bowels many times; or your bowel movements stop (become blocked), or you cannot pass gas, especially if you are also vomiting
- Your skin or the whites of your eyes turn yellow
- Your abdomen becomes swollen or seems larger
- Your abdomen becomes stiff, hard and tender to touch.
- The pain does not improve in 1-2 days
- You develop any dizziness
- Have pain in, or between, your shoulder blades with/without nausea
- You develop chest, neck or shoulder pain
- You have difficulty breathing through your mouth
- Symptoms do not improve in 2 days after starting treatment
- Fever of 100.4 F or greater develops or persists after 2 days of starting treatment or develop shaking chills

- You have abdominal pain with vaginal bleeding
- You have scrotal pain

Self-Care Treatment

Heartburn

- Avoid ibuprofen, naproxen and aspirin types of pain relievers which can irritate the lining of the stomach. If pain medication or fever reducers are needed, take acetaminophen (Tylenol) per package dosing instructions
- Avoid foods which will worsen acid production or irritate the stomach lining: caffeine, alcohol, spicy or highly seasoned foods, foods high in fat, chocolate and peppermint, sugary foods, carbonated beverages, Vitamin C, citrus fruits and juices, tomatoes, cauliflower, broccoli, Brussel sprouts, cabbage, spinach, and onions
- Sleeping on your left side has shown to help decrease reflux
- Elevate the head of the bed by 6-8 inches
- Maintain good posture—do not slouch. Slouching reverses the effects of gravity in preventing stomach contents from moving downward when you are swallowing
- Do not eat foods or drink beverages immediately before going to bed
- Avoid smoking or alcohol use
- Eat small, frequent meals

Urine Symptoms

Call to make an appointment at the on-campus Student Health Clinic for urine infection symptoms such as burning, frequency, urgency or abdominal discomfort

- Empty your bladder often especially immediately after intercourse
- Wipe from front to back following urination or bowel movement
- Avoid resisting the urge to urinate
- Drink plenty of fluids regularly
- Wear 100% cotton underwear
- Treat any vaginal infection symptoms promptly

Constipation

- Prevention is the best approach
- Eat a well-balanced diet that includes unprocessed bran, whole wheat grains, fresh fruits and vegetables. Drink plenty of fluids, 8-10 glasses of water a day
- Exercise regularly
- Set aside time for undisturbed visits to the toilet
- Don't ignore the urge to have a bowel movement
- Whenever there is a significant or prolonged change in bowel habits, check with a Health Care Provider

Menstrual Cramps

- Apply hot water bottle or heating pad to the abdominal area or lower back for 20-30 minutes every 3-4 hours. This increases blood flow and can decrease spasms. Never fall asleep with the heating pad on due to risk of burns
- Drink warm beverages
- Eat small and light, frequent meals
- Practice relaxation techniques like meditation, yoga, or deep breathing
- Keep your legs raised while lying down, or lie on your side with your knees bent
- Light exercise to increase release of endorphins and to help decrease prostaglandin release
- Warm showers/baths
- Avoid caffeine
- If you are able to take NSAIDS such as ibuprofen or naproxen, these can help with symptoms; otherwise take Tylenol (acetaminophen) per package instructions unless you are allergic.

Please call to make an appointment at your on-campus Student Health Clinic or with your PCP or go to Urgent Care or the Emergency Department if your concerns do not improve with conservative self-care treatment or if you have worsening symptoms.

Please know your health problems and allergies. Information contained in this handout is for educational purposes only. It is not a substitute for evaluation and treatment by a Healthcare professional. As new and updated information becomes available, the content may change. Please contact your Healthcare Provider or the on-campus Student Health Clinic with any questions.

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