

Paediatric department

Tummy pain in children

What causes tummy pain?

Tummy pain in children is very common. Most children will not need any specific treatment and the pain will get better by itself.

- Common causes of tummy pain include constipation, a waterworks infection (urinary tract infection) and tummy bugs (gastroenteritis).
- Less commonly, tummy pain can be caused by something more serious, such as appendicitis.

In many children with longstanding tummy pain, a cause is never found, and the pain goes away by itself.

Can I care for my child at home?

You can look after your child at home if your child:

- Is alert and interacts with you
- Develops diarrhea and vomiting ([Microsoft Word - A0072 Information about diarrhoea and vomiting.docx](#) (kingstonhospital.nhs.uk) but has no signs of dehydration, or any other worrying signs listed above
- Experiences period (menstrual) pains in a girl
- Is frequently constipated – ([A0100-Constipation-in-children-2.pdf](#) (kingstonhospital.nhs.uk))

How can I help care for my child at home?

- Give paracetamol/ibuprofen (always read the labels on the bottle, and never give more than the recommended dose for age). Assess how they respond to it
- Keep your child well hydrated and encourage them to drink lots of fluids
- Avoid fizzy drinks and fruit juices
- Offer your child bland foods
- Let them lie down and relax for a period of time
- Encourage them to go to the toilet to do a poo or pass some wind.

When should I seek medical attention for my child?

Call 999 or go to A&E if your child:

- Has a temperature which is not responding to paracetamol/ibuprofen (Please always read the instructions on the label)
- Becomes pale and floppy
- Develops cold hands and feet
- Becomes drowsy or difficult to wake
- Has green or blood stained sick (vomit)
- Develops severe pain despite pain relief such as paracetamol or ibuprofen, particularly if the pain is on the right-hand side of the lower tummy

Has testicular pain (especially in teenage boys).

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Get an urgent GP appointment or call 111 if you child:

- Is under 3 months of age and has a temperature above 38 C, or they feel hot to touch
- Is 3-6 months of age and has a temperature above 39 C, or they feel very hot to touch
- Has other signs of illness, such as a rash, as well as a high temperature
- Has a high temperature that's lasted for more than 5 days
- Develops a swollen tummy
- Has blood in their poo or wee
- Experiences constant pain for more than one day despite pain killers
- Becomes increasingly thirsty or is weeing noticeably more or less than normal
- Develops yellow skin or eyes
- Has weight loss or poor growth over a few months
- Or you are concerned about your child.

For more information

Healthier together website

<https://what0-18.nhs.uk/parentscarers/worried-your-child-unwell/tummy-ache>

NHS conditions

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stomach-ache>

What if my child keeps having tummy pain?

- If your child has tummy pain that they experience more than once a week over a period of months, please ask your GP to assess your child. Sometimes, children may need a urine or blood test to help rule out certain conditions.
- Scans of the tummy (ultrasound) are not often used as they don't usually tell doctors what is causing tummy pain. In some cases, your GP may decide to refer your child to a Paediatric Clinic for further assessment, and they will discuss this with you.



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FROM BIRTH - 18 YEARS

Patient Advice and Liaison Services (PALS)

PALS can provide information, advice and support to patients and relatives and will listen to and act on your concerns, suggestions or queries.

020 8934 3993

khft.pals@nhs.net

Accessible information

We are actively working to make our patient information easier to read and accessible in a range of formats. If you would like this information in large print, audio or electronic format please speak to a member of staff in the department. If you need a different format, please let us know and we will do our best to meet your request

Pastoral & Spiritual Support Services

We offer a multi-cultural approach serving people of all faiths and life philosophies. A Duty Chaplain is available 24/7. You can request to speak to a Church of England or Roman Catholic Priest, the Rabbi or Imam.

Please call the hospital switchboard on 020 8546 7711 and ask to speak to the Duty Chaplain.

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