

# ABDOMINAL PAIN

## Level II

Skill Level: RN

Definition: Constant, severe abdominal pain in upper or lower abdomen. May be associated with bloody emesis, melena (black stool) or hematochezia (bright, red, bloody stool). Rebound, rigidity or guarding may be present in severe cases.

MODERATE	
<p><b>Subjective:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “I’m having stomach pain”.</li><li>• Review history for ulcers, cholelithiasis, kidney stones, appendicitis or trauma.</li><li>• Review history of drug and alcohol use.</li><li>• C/O nausea or vomiting.</li><li>• C/O diarrhea or constipation.</li><li>• Blood in stool or vomit.</li></ul>	<p><b>Assessment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Alteration in comfort: Pain, nausea and vomiting related to stimulation of the vomiting center secondary to pain and/or stress.</li><li>• Alteration in nutritional status and potential for fluid volume deficit due to vomiting or diarrhea.</li></ul>
<p><b>Objective:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No signs or symptoms of shock.</li><li>• Review current medications.</li><li>• Check for jaundice or scleral icterus.</li><li>• Check for dehydration or other medical illnesses, i.e., diabetes, renal failure, diverticular disease, Crohn’s disease.</li><li>• A complete abdominal assessment.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Palpate/percuss for localization of pain.</li><li>○ No guarding or rebound pain.</li></ul></li><li>• Vital Signs (If evidence of Shock, go to that protocol.)</li><li>• Fever 101 degrees or higher</li></ul>	<p><b>Plan:</b> Do all or any of Level I interventions. At nursing discretion may also use any of the below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Obtain CBC and multi chem profile, stool or vomit for occult blood (ASAP). Add Urine Dip (and culture if indicated) if pain is in lower abdomen. Call practitioner if abnormal results.</li><li>• Consider possibility of Pregnancy.</li><li>• NPO (admit for observation or monitor), or liquid diet as tolerated.</li><li>• Review medications and advise patient to stop ASA and NSAIDS.</li><li>• If localized pain, with or without fever, call medical provider.</li></ul>

## Abdominal Pain - Level II

	<p><b>Plan (Continued):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Check for patient allergy and consider: Phenergan 25mg PO or PR QID/prn for vomiting.</li></ul> <p>Immodium 2mg—2 tabs PO/prn initially, followed by 1 tab/prn with each diarrhea BM up to total 6 tabs per day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recheck patient daily until condition is improved or, if condition worsens, go to “Severe” below.</li></ul> <p>Provider appointment next available working day if needed.</p>
<b>SEVERE</b>	
<p><b>Subjective:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “I’m having severe stomach pain.”</li><li>• Vomiting blood.</li><li>• Bloody diarrhea.</li><li>• Vomiting without ability to eat.</li></ul>	<p><b>Assessment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Potential for Injury: Possible hypovolemic shock or hemorrhage if associated with penetration of ulcer.</li><li>• Alteration in nutritional status.</li><li>• Potential for fluid volume deficit.</li></ul>
<p><b>Objective:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Abnormal Vital signs. (Elevated temperature, increased respirations, hypotension, tachycardia).</li><li>• Diaphoretic, poor skin turgor, dry mucous membranes (i.e. Dehydration).</li><li>• Abnormal Abdominal exam—no bowel tones, bloated and distended, firm and diffusely tender.</li><li>• Guarding, rebound pain, localized pain.</li><li>• Bright red blood in vomit.</li><li>• Bloody diarrhea.</li></ul>	<p><b>Plan:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prepare to transport for emergency care.</li><li>• If S/S shock present, refer to Emergency Protocol for Shock Hypovolemic.</li><li>• Notify practitioner.</li></ul>

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**APPROVED:**

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Health Services Manager

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Date

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Chief Medical Officer

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1/12/09  
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