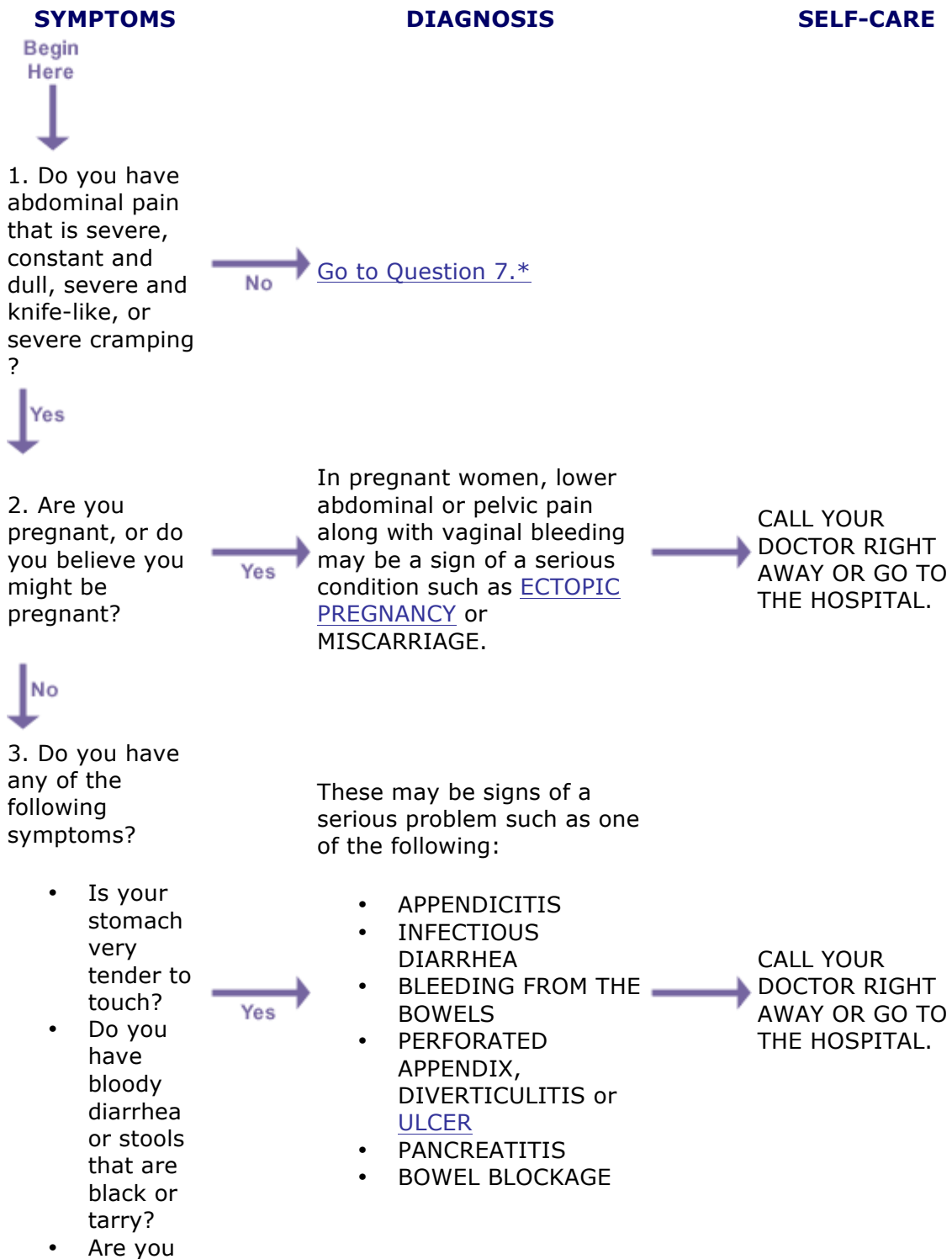


# Abdominal Pain, Short-Term

Just about everyone has had a "stomachache" at one time or another. But sudden severe abdominal pain, also called acute pain, shouldn't be ignored. It often indicates a serious problem. Follow this chart for more information about acute abdominal pain. Or find more information about [abdominal pain that has lasted for more than 3 days](#).



- vomiting  
blood ?
- Do you have a fever?

↓ No

4. Does the pain start in your upper middle or upper right abdomen and shift to your back, and does it occur or worsen when you eat fatty or greasy food ?

→ Yes → You may have [GALLSTONES](#) or an [INFECTION](#) of the gallbladder.

→ See your doctor promptly.

↓ No

5. Do you have a sudden sharp pain that starts in the back near the ribs and moves down toward the groin?

→ Yes → Your pain may be from a [KIDNEY STONE](#) or [TUMOR](#). If you have a fever, you may have a [KIDNEY](#) or [BLADDER INFECTION](#).

→ CALL YOUR DOCTOR RIGHT AWAY OR GO TO THE HOSPITAL.

↓ No

6. Is your pain in the lower right abdomen, and do you have blood or mucus in your stools?

→ Yes → These may be signs of [ULCERATIVE COLITIS](#) or [CROHN'S DISEASE](#), inflammatory diseases of the colon or large intestine.

→ See your doctor.

↓ No

\*7. Do you have a mild ache or burning pain in the upper abdomen, or cramping pain that comes and goes?

→ No → [Go to Question 11.\\*\\*](#)

↓ Yes

8. Do you have watery diarrhea, → Yes → You may have [GASTROENTERITIS](#),

→ Use fever-reducing medicines. (Don't

fever, muscle aches, chills, nausea or vomiting?

commonly called the stomach flu. Severe cases of gastroenteritis can lead to dehydration in infants and young children.

give children aspirin without consulting your doctor.) Call your doctor if vomiting and diarrhea persist for more than two days, or if you see any blood or mucus in the diarrhea. Call your doctor if your child shows signs of dehydration: lethargy, dry mouth, decreased urination.



9. Has it been a few days or longer since you have had a bowel movement and do you have to strain when you have a bowel movement?

Yes

[CONSTIPATION](#) may be the source of your discomfort. Occasionally a child will hold a bowel movement because of pain from a [HEMORRHOID](#) or an [ANAL FISSURE](#).

Be sure to include lots of [FIBER](#) in your diet and drink enough fluids. Bulk-forming laxatives can also help. Many laxatives are available to treat constipation in children. Your doctor can recommend one that is appropriate for your child. See your doctor if the pain or constipation continues.



10. Do you have pain or a burning sensation in the upper abdomen that is either relieved or gets worse when you eat?

Yes

This may be from [GASTRITIS](#), an irritation of the stomach, or from an [ULCER](#).

Try taking an over-the-counter antacid on a regular basis. See your doctor if an antacid doesn't help or if the pain comes back quickly.



\*\*11. Are you a woman who has a constant pain in the lower

Yes

A dull, constant pain accompanied by a vaginal discharge may be a sign of [PELVIC INFLAMMATORY](#)

This condition requires an antibiotic. See your doctor.

abdomen along with a vaginal discharge?

DISEASE (PID), an infection around your ovaries, uterus and fallopian tubes.



12. Do you have a mild pain, discomfort or a feeling of pressure in the lower abdomen along with a burning sensation when you urinate?

Yes

CYSTITIS, an infection of the urinary tract, can be painful and cause abdominal discomfort.

See your doctor promptly.



If the pain doesn't stop within a few hours, call your doctor. For more information, please talk to your doctor. If you think your problem is serious, call right away.

*This tool has been reviewed by doctors and is for general educational purposes only. It is not a substitute for medical advice. The information in this tool should not be relied upon to make decisions about your health. Always consult your family doctor with questions about your individual condition(s) and/or circumstances.*