



## Children & Abdominal Pain

Children of all ages have stomach aches or digestive problems from time to time. Belly pain can vary in intensity, depending on the cause, from mild or moderate to very painful. When your child has pain in his or her belly it may be challenging to know what to do.

About 15 percent of children who have belly pain do not seek medical attention, according to the pediatric organization GIKids.org. "Some abdominal pain may just be a problem for a few days," explains Dr. Patrick Jones, from Bronson Pediatric Gastroenterology. "However, if a child complains of persistent pain and their symptoms worsen, it's time to schedule an appointment with your child's doctor. Your child's doctor may refer you to a specialist."

### What to Watch For:

- Fever
- Pain in specific location on the stomach
- Vomiting
- Trouble gaining weight/ losing weight
- Blood in stool

Doctors may perform tests to rule out a blockage, inflammation, disease or an infection. If tests don't show any specific cause, the pain may be diagnosed as what's medically known as functional abdominal pain. About 10 to 15 percent of school-aged children are impacted by it. This is not serious and causes no long-term health problems. "Parents should partner with their child's doctor to identify and help reduce the triggers of their child's pain," says Dr. Jones.

### Ways to manage or reduce your child's pain:

- Make sure your child is eating foods rich in fiber and drinking plenty of fluids. Kids should avoid excess sweets, highly processed foods and pop.
- Reduce stress at home and at school.
- Encourage exercise and outdoor play.

**If your child is experiencing constant belly pain, please talk to your pediatrician right away.**

Sources:

GI Kids

<http://www.gikids.org/>

International Foundation for Functional Gastrointestinal Disorders

<http://www.aboutkidsgi.org/living-with-gi-disorders/talking-about-gi-disorders.html>

***This article is brought to you by Bronson Children's Hospital, Southwest Michigan's only children's hospital. For more information about children's health, visit [bronsonhealth.com/children](http://bronsonhealth.com/children).***