

Abdominal Pain

Abdominal pain is a common complaint in pediatric patients. It can be caused by a variety of conditions ranging from mild to life-threatening. The causes of pediatric abdominal pain are numerous and can include gastrointestinal, genitourinary, gynecological, and systemic conditions. In this article, we will discuss the most common causes of pediatric abdominal pain.

Gastrointestinal causes:

The gastrointestinal system is the most common source of pediatric abdominal pain. The most frequent causes include:

1. Gastroenteritis: This is an inflammation of the stomach and intestines, usually caused by a viral or bacterial infection. Symptoms include diarrhea, vomiting, and abdominal pain.
2. Constipation: Constipation occurs when a child has difficulty passing stools. It is a common cause of abdominal pain in children. The pain is usually located in the lower abdomen and is often associated with bloating.
3. Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD): GERD is a condition in which stomach acid flows back into the esophagus, causing inflammation and pain. Symptoms include heartburn, chest pain, and abdominal pain.
4. Appendicitis: Appendicitis is a condition in which the appendix becomes inflamed and infected. It can cause severe abdominal pain that starts around the belly button and migrates to the lower right side of the abdomen.
5. Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD): IBD is a chronic condition that affects the digestive tract. It can cause abdominal pain, diarrhea, and other symptoms. The two most common types of IBD are Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.
6. Peptic ulcer disease: Peptic ulcer disease occurs when there is a break in the lining of the stomach or small intestine. It can cause abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, and other symptoms.

Genitourinary causes:

Genitourinary causes of abdominal pain are less common in children but can still be a significant source of discomfort. The most frequent causes include:

1. Urinary tract infection (UTI): UTIs are bacterial infections that affect the urinary system. They can cause abdominal pain, fever, and other symptoms.
2. Kidney stones: Kidney stones are hard mineral deposits that form in the kidneys. They can cause severe pain in the lower abdomen and back.
3. Testicular torsion: Testicular torsion occurs when the testicle twists on its spermatic cord, causing a disruption in blood flow. It can cause severe pain and swelling in the scrotum.

Gynecological causes:

Abdominal pain in female children can also be caused by gynecological conditions. The most frequent causes include:

1. Ovarian cysts: Ovarian cysts are fluid-filled sacs that develop in the ovaries. They can cause abdominal pain and discomfort.
2. Menstrual cramps: Menstrual cramps are a common cause of abdominal pain in adolescent girls. They occur during the menstrual cycle and can be severe enough to interfere with daily activities.

Systemic causes:

Systemic conditions can also cause abdominal pain in children. The most frequent causes include:

- 1 Sickle cell disease: Sickle cell disease is an inherited blood disorder that affects the red blood cells. It can cause abdominal pain, fatigue, and other symptoms.
- 2 Diabetes: Diabetes is a condition in which the body cannot regulate blood sugar levels. It can cause abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, and other symptoms.
- 3 Kawasaki disease: Kawasaki disease is a rare condition that affects children under the age of five. It can cause abdominal pain, fever, and other symptoms.
- 4 Henoch-Schonlein purpura (HSP): HSP is a condition that causes inflammation of the blood vessels. It can cause abdominal pain, rash, and other symptoms.