

# Strategies for Treating Abdominal Pain

## Low fructose diet

Studies have shown that many are sensitive to this sugar, and it may cause abdominal pain and nausea. There is concern that it increases children's risk for obesity and diabetes.

Avoid the following:

- Juice, soda, fruit punch drinks that contain fructose and corn syrup solids
- Fruit roll-ups or fake fruit snacks
- Excessive dried fruits
- Coffee house flavor syrups
- Sport drinks often contain fructose or sugar substitutes that enhance abdominal pain
- Limit portion sizes of pears, apples and mango
- Be a label reader; you will discover fructose and corn syrup solids in many foods

## Limit lactose

Some patients find it helpful to reduce the lactose in the diet by using treated milk such as "LACTAID" and limiting quantity and portion size of cheese and yogurt.

**Avoid gum** chewing, as it causes air swallowing, and may increase abdominal pain. The sugar-free sugar alcohols, sorbitol and xylitol, cause gas, diarrhea, bloating or abdominal pain in some children.

## Soften stools

- Keep stools soft, and assure your child sits on the toilet to have bowel movement before going to school. A diet with moderate fiber may help. All starches such as bread, cereals, rice and pasta should have at least 2 grams of fiber/serving.
- Miralax, a stool softener, is available over the counter and is safe for use in children. Mix Miralax in water; Crystal Light dissolves and hides it well.

## Manage stress

Stress and anxiety may increase the perception of pain regardless of the source. Work with your primary care provider to find a local resource for stress management. Some offer strategies to help children cope with the pain to stay in school.

## Other helpful ideas

- Peppermint, decaffeinated tea may help in older children.
- Probiotics (such as "Culturelle"), may be useful, particularly for those recently on antibiotics.
- You may unscrew the capsule and place contents in a soft food.
- Avoid clothing with tight waistbands.
- Avoid high-dose vitamins and unproven herbal supplements; many of their side effects have not been well-documented.
- Warm-packs to the abdomen or a warm bath often improve the pain.

