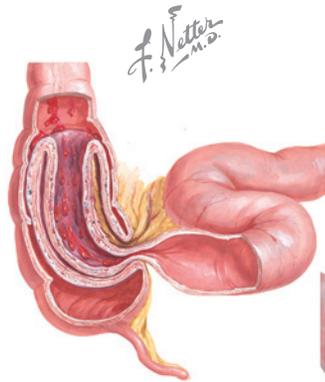
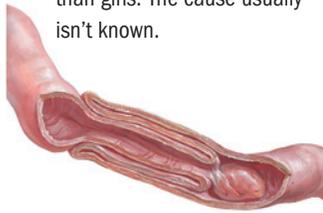


# CARING FOR YOUR CHILD WITH INTUSSUSCEPTION



Intussusception is a serious disorder in which part of the intestine collapses into itself, so one part slips inside the other, like a telescope. Food and fluids can't pass through the blocked intestine. It most often occurs in babies and children 3 months to 6 years old, more often in boys than girls. The cause usually isn't known.



Babies may start sudden, loud crying caused by abdominal pain and bring their knees up to their chest. Severe abdominal pain comes and goes. Children may get pale, sweaty, listless, and weak. They may have vomiting, diarrhea, blood and mucus in the stool, swollen stomach, fever, and dehydration.



Barium X-ray

Your child's medical history and physical examination are used to make a preliminary diagnosis. A barium enema will confirm the diagnosis.

## What Is Intussusception?

Intussusception is a serious disorder that involves the bowel—either the small or large intestine. Part of the intestine collapses into itself, so one part slips inside the other, like a telescope. The intestine becomes blocked. Food and fluids can't pass through. The blood supply to the intestines may also be cut off, which causes injury or death of that part of the intestine. Intussusception most often occurs in babies and children between the ages of 3 months and 6 years. It's two to three times more common in boys than girls. It's rare in adults.

## What Causes Intussusception?

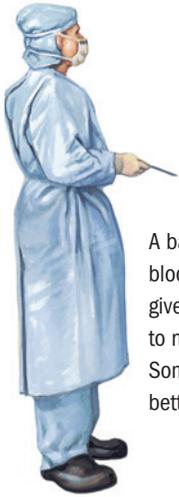
The cause of most cases is unknown. It sometimes occurs after an infection of the intestines. A noncancerous growth inside the bowel or in rare cases, cancer in the intestine can trigger it.

## What Are the Signs and Symptoms of Intussusception?

Early in the illness, children may complain of stomach cramping. Babies start sudden, loud crying caused by pain in the abdomen (belly) and bring their knees up to their chest. The severe abdominal pain comes and goes. Children may also vomit and become pale and sweaty. As the intestinal blockage gets worse, blood and mucus can appear in the stool and the stomach may get swollen. Children may become very listless and weak. Sometimes a lump can be felt in the stomach. Other signs and symptoms include diarrhea, fever, and dehydration.

## How Is Intussusception Diagnosed?

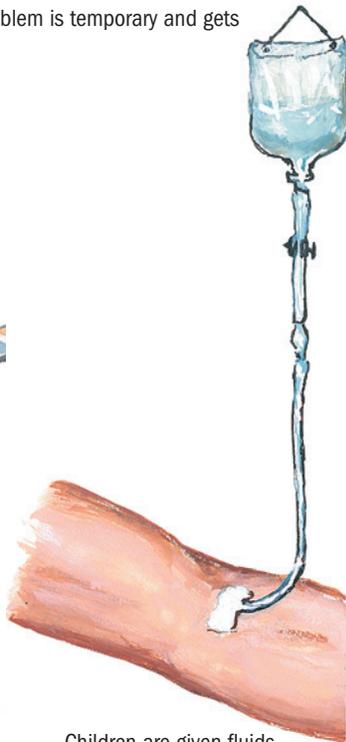
The health care provider makes a preliminary diagnosis from the medical history and physical examination. If the child seems very ill, has a fever, or lost blood, or if symptoms have been going on for more than a few hours, immediate surgery may be done to fix the problem. For more stable children, the next step is usually a barium enema. In this test, a liquid containing a substance called barium is given. Special X-rays are taken as barium moves through the intestine. The barium helps in diagnosis and sometimes can force the intestine to straighten. It can therefore also act as a treatment.



A barium enema can straighten the intestine and clear the blockage. If it doesn't, surgery is needed. Antibiotics are given for infections. Untreated intussusception can lead to necrosis and sepsis, which are very dangerous. Sometimes, the problem is temporary and gets better on its own.



Don't use home remedies, such as laxatives. These can be dangerous.



Children are given fluids intravenously. Another option may be using a nasogastric tube to help lower pressure in the intestines.



Remember that intussusception is an emergency. Call your health care provider immediately if you see symptoms. Then call 911 or take your child to the emergency room.

**FROM THE DESK OF**

**NOTES**

**How Is Intussusception Treated?**

If the barium enema doesn't straighten the intestine and clear the blockage, surgery is needed. Antibiotics are given for infections. Children are given fluids intravenously (through a vein). Additional treatment may also include using a tube put through the nose and into the stomach (nasogastric tube) to help decrease pressure in the intestines. Untreated intussusception can lead to necrosis (death of tissue) and widespread infection (sepsis), which can be life-threatening. Sometimes intussusception is very mild and the problem is temporary and gets better on its own. As children get older the risk of recurrence decreases. Most recurrences take place within the first 24 hours after the condition is treated. Call the health care provider right away if symptoms seem to be returning.

**DOs and DON'Ts in Managing Intussusception:**

- ✓ **DO** remember that intussusception is an emergency. Call your health care provider immediately if you see symptoms. Then call 911 or take your child to the emergency room. Untreated intussusception is almost always fatal for babies and young children.
- ⊘ **DON'T** use home remedies, such as laxatives. These can be dangerous.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

**Contact the following sources:**

- American Academy of Pediatrics  
Tel: (847) 434-4000  
**Website:** <http://www.aap.org>
- American College of Gastroenterologists  
Tel: (703) 820-7400  
**Website:** <http://www.acg.gi.org>
- National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse  
Phone: 1-800-891-5389 or 1-301-654-3810  
**Web:** [www.niddk.nih.gov/health/digest/nddic.htm](http://www.niddk.nih.gov/health/digest/nddic.htm)
- American College of Emergency Physicians  
Tel: (800) 798-1822 or (972) 550-0911  
**Website:** <http://www.acep.org>