

Discharge Information for the Non-operative Management of Blunt Abdominal Trauma

Summary Points to Remember

- Most injuries to organs in the abdomen (belly) are managed without surgery
- You may be required to limit your activities as advised by your doctor
- If after discharge you experience any of the symptoms listed below then you should return to The Royal Melbourne Hospital or your nearest emergency department

Blunt Abdominal Trauma

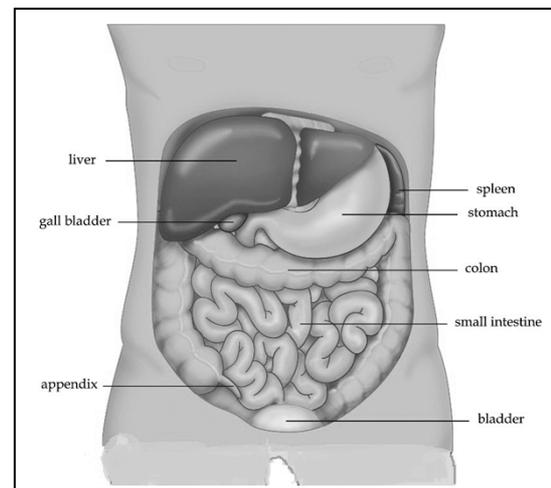
Blunt abdominal trauma is caused by a direct hit to the belly. This can happen in a car or bike crash, a fall or if you were assaulted and punched to the belly.

Internal organs, such as your, spleen, liver and kidneys can be hurt and this may cause bleeding.

Most of the time the bleeding from these organs will stop on its own. The injuries will heal and you will not need an operation.

If you have been in a car crash, you may have some bruising where the seatbelt has been. This bruising will fade and the pain in your abdomen will get better over the coming days.

To monitor any bleeding the doctors and nurses will closely look at your belly, take blood tests, and check your blood pressure and heart rate. You might need a CT scan to allow the doctors to look closely at the injury. If the bleeding continues or is severe you may require an operation or a procedure in x-ray to fix it. A doctor will discuss this with you.



The Liver Spleen

Discharge and follow-up instructions

When you have been discharged from The Royal Melbourne Hospital we will give an appointment for the outpatient clinic if required or you may need follow up by your GP. They will check that you are recovering and your injury is healing. Your nurse will explain your follow up plan on discharge.

When you are home you may eat and drink what you feel like. It is important that you stay active as this will assist in decreasing complications such as chest infections and blood clots in your legs.

You are able to undertake gentle exercise that does not involve any contact to your belly, this could include walking, stationary bike riding.

To assist with this you will be given pain tablets on discharge from the pharmacist. Take the pain tablets regularly when you need them so that you can walk around and sit out of bed.

Strong pain tablets may cause you to become constipated to help prevent this we will also give you

some tablets to assist with your bowel movements.

Activity Limitations

It takes up to 3 months for an injury to the liver, spleen or kidneys to fully heal. Until that time, these organs can sometimes start to bleed days after they have been injured. Especially if they are re-injured. To help make sure this doesn't happen you will need to limit your activities for approximately 3 months or as advised by your doctor. Some limitations may include the following:

- No contact sports e.g. football, basketball, rugby, and boxing. This includes balls sports such as cricket, where you may be injured by the ball
- No heavy lifting e.g. at work, gym/weights, or strenuous household activities
- No vigorous/ dangerous activities e.g. motorbike riding, horse riding, skiing, ladder climbing, jogging/running

Signs and Symptoms

Sign and symptoms of bleeding or infection

- Increasing pain in your belly
- Increasing size of your belly
- Feeling faint and/or dizzy
- Fever (high temperatures may indicate infection)
- Nausea and vomiting
- New blood in your urine

If you have any of these symptoms and they get worse, you should return to The Royal Melbourne Hospital or the nearest hospital emergency department for assessment.

Summary

Liver, spleen and kidney injuries can heal by themselves without operations. They require close monitoring and limiting activities which may cause new bleeding. Discuss with your doctor when you will be able to return to your normal activities.

Contact

Trauma Clinical Nurse Consultant

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