



Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Bowel Obstruction

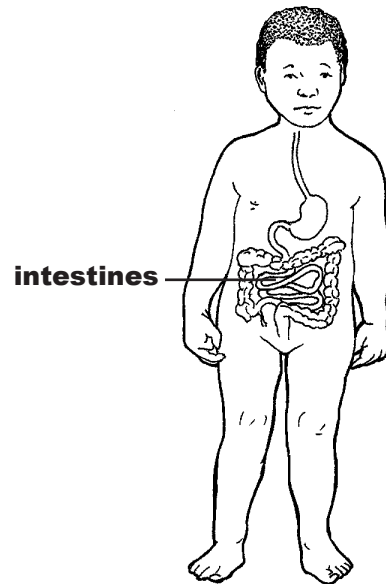
## What is bowel obstruction?

A bowel obstruction means the small or large intestine is blocked, and stool cannot move through as usual. A bowel obstruction is not the same as constipation.

## What causes a bowel obstruction?

Many things can cause bowel obstruction. Some of them are:

- **Scars from abdominal surgery:** Scar tissue may become tangled with the intestine. This prevents the stool from moving through.
- **Volvulus:** The intestine twists.
- **Intussusception:** One part of the intestine slips into another part of the intestine, like a telescope.
- **Constipation:** The stool moves slowly through the large intestine. It does not come out often enough, and comes out hard and dry.
- **Tumors:** A growth in the intestine. Tumors are not often the cause of bowel obstruction.



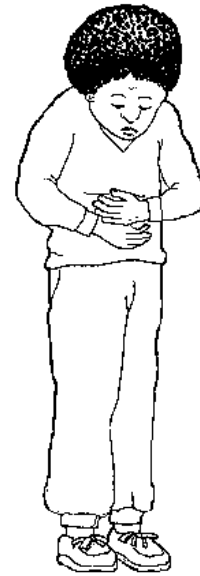
**The intestines get blocked in bowel obstruction.**

## What will I see if my child has a bowel obstruction? Is it painful?

Bowel obstruction may cause strong stomach cramps. Your child's belly may be tender and bloated. Your child may have an upset stomach or throw up light green or golden yellow fluid. There may be no stools, little or no urine and a fever.

## How is bowel obstruction treated?

Bowel obstruction can be very serious if it is not treated. The treatment depends on what is causing the obstruction. Usually, bowel obstruction is treated with surgery. Some types of obstruction can be treated in other ways, such as with a barium enema.



**A child with a bowel obstruction may have an upset stomach.**

yes    no   If you want to better understand how bowel obstruction is different from constipation, ask your nurse or doctor for the handout **Constipation, #8**.

## Now that you've read this:

Tell your nurse or doctor what a bowel obstruction is, and how it is treated.  
(Check when done.)



If you have any questions or concerns,

call your child's doctor or    call \_\_\_\_\_

If you want to know more about child health and illness,  
visit our library at The Emily Center at Phoenix Children's Hospital  
1919 East Thomas Road  
Phoenix, AZ 85016  
602-546-1400  
866-933-6459  
[www.phoenixchildrens.com](http://www.phoenixchildrens.com)

Disclaimer

The information provided at this site is intended to be general information, and is provided for educational purposes only. It is not intended to take the place of examination, treatment, or consultation with a physician. Phoenix Children's Hospital urges you to contact your physician with any questions you may have about a medical condition.

Tuesday, November 11, 2008 • DRAFT to family review  
#156 • Written by Shari Gow, RN, BSN and Janet Burnett, BSN, RN  
• Illustrated by Dennis Swain



# The Emily Center

## Bowel Obstruction

### Diagnosis/Disease/Illness

Si usted desea esta información en español,  
por favor pídasela a su enfermero o doctor.

Name of Health Care Provider: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: 156  
For office use: Date returned: \_\_\_\_\_  db  nb

## Family Review of Handout

**Health care providers:** Please teach families with this handout.

**Families:** Please let us know what you think of this handout.

Would you say this handout is hard to read?  Yes  No

easy to read?  Yes  No

Please circle the parts of the handout that were hard to understand.

Would you say this handout is interesting to read?  Yes  No

Why or why not?

Would you do anything differently after reading  
this handout?  Yes  No

If yes, what?

After reading this handout, do you have any  
questions about the subject?  Yes  No

If yes, what?

Is there anything you don't like about the drawings?

Yes  No

If yes, what?

What changes would you make in this handout to make it better or easier to understand?

Please return your review of this handout to your nurse or doctor or send it to the address below.

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**Thank you for helping us!**