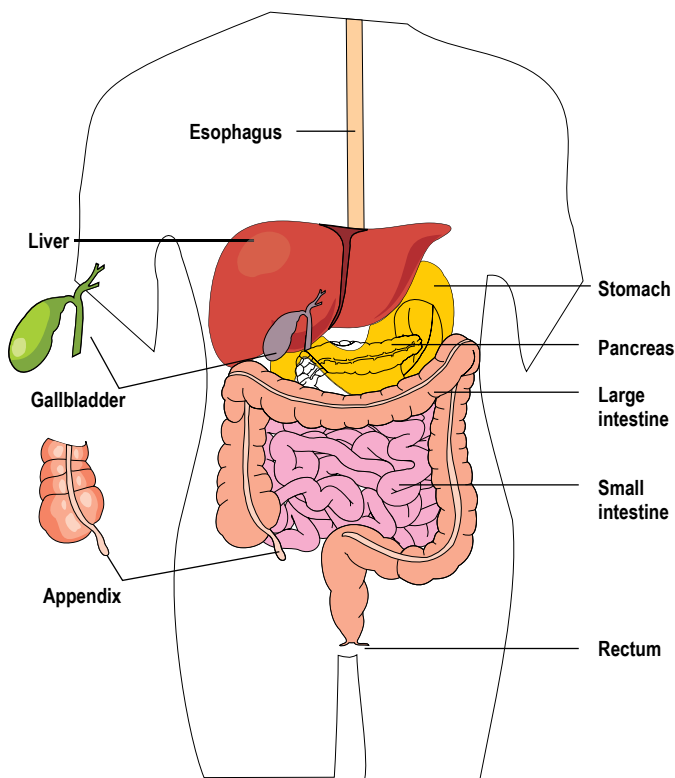




Ascites

What is the abdomen?

The space between the chest and pelvis is called the abdomen. The abdomen contains the digestive organs, stomach, small intestine, large intestine, pancreas, gall bladder. It also contains the kidneys, spleen. At the back, the abdomen is supported by the spine, and in the front, the abdominal skin and muscles protect the abdomen. The peritoneal cavity separates the organs in the abdominal cavity from the abdominal wall.



What are the causes of ascites?

- Advanced liver disease or cirrhosis is the commonest cause of ascites
- Decrease in albumin a protein that is carried in the blood
- Salt and water retention
- Congestive heart failure
- Advanced kidney failure
- Advanced cancer of organs in the abdominal cavity
- Tumor/ mass pressing on the portal vein from outside
- Blood clot obstructing the normal flow of blood in the liver
- Tuberculosis
- Pancreatitis
- Ovarian disease
- Hypothyroidism

What are the symptoms of ascites?

- Abdominal distension
- Breathlessness
- Increase in weight due to retention of water
- Pain, if there is tense ascites
- Decreased appetite and vomiting sensation
- Symptoms of diseases that cause the ascites
- Umbilical hernia

What is ascites?

Ascites is the accumulation of fluid in the abdominal (peritoneal) cavity. It can result because of numerous causes.

What are the tests done for a case of ascites?

- Tests to confirm presence of ascites –



KANAKIA
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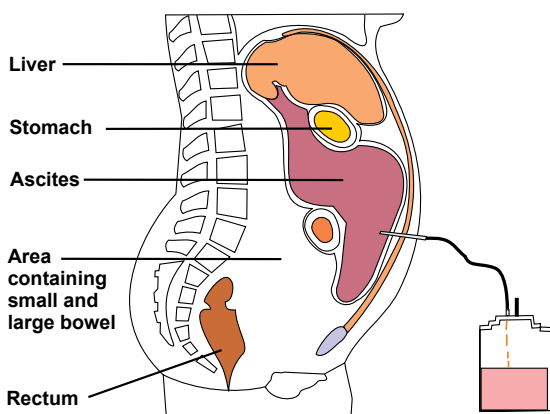
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Ascites

- USG abdomen, ascitic tapping
- Tests to find out cause for ascites – LFT, HBsAg, HCV
- Tests to assess complications of ascites – CBC, renal function tests, bleeding profile, x-ray chest, MRI

What is the treatment of ascites?

- Treatment of cause
- Medications
- Therapeutic ascitic tapping or removal of fluid to relieve pressure
- Surgery
 - Transjugular intrahepatic portosystemic shunt - TIPS
 - Peritoneo-venous shunting
- Other management
 - Salt restricted diet Resting in a reclined position with feet elevated
 - Prevention and management of constipation
 - Avoid opioids
 - Avoid alcohol
 - Avoid acetaminophen
 - Daily weighing the body weight and consulting the doctor for an increase in body weight



What are the complications of ascites?

- Reduced sodium or hyponatremia
- Spontaneous bacterial peritonitis or infection of the ascitic fluid which occurs in 10-30% of patients
- Hepatorenal syndrome is precipitated when there is poor renal function due to lowering of blood pressure. It can be as a result of bacterial infections, bleeding or removal of large quantities of ascitic fluid.

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