

# Ileus

**Ileus**, or **intestinal obstruction** , is one of the forms of sudden abdominal events .

## Ileus - Symptoms

In general, **4 main symptoms** indicate intestinal obstruction . They are:

1. **Abdominal pain** (colicky, sharp pain arising from distension or suddenly). *More detailed information can be found on the page Types of pain in NPB .*
2. **Vomiting** (initially arising reflexively, later from accumulation of contents).
3. **Stoppage of gas and stool** ( constipation and flatulence ).
4. **Abdominal swelling** (we describe it as " *belly above niveau* ").



Surgical treatment of ileus

## Ileus - Types

Based on etiopathogenesis, we distinguish several types of ileus:

1. **Mechanical** (obturation, volvulus , strangulation ).
2. **Neurogenic** (paralytic, spastic, mixed).
3. **Vascular** (occurs due to arterial embolism or venous thrombosis ).

### Simple mechanical ileus (obstructive)

*Subjectively :*

- **Colicky pains** , not very strong, the intensity gradually increases (later permanent pain from distension with a decrease in peristalsis).
- **Vomiting** (occurs later due to stagnation of bowel contents above the obstruction. The more distal the obstruction, the later it occurs.)

*Objectively :*

- **Tactile soreness** (it is mainly localized in the area of the obstacle. After moving the palpating hand away, the pain disappears).
- Audible **effortful peristalsis** .
- **Peristaltic waves** (visible on the abdominal wall).

### Strangulation ileus

*Subjectively :*

- **Colicky pains** (very strong from the beginning).
- **Vomiting** (from the beginning).
- **Flatulence** (with stoppage of passing gases and stools; troubles the patient from the beginning of the episode).
- **A mixture of blood and mucus in the stool** .

*Objectively :*

- **Tactile soreness** (*in the place of the obstacle, does not disappear when the examining hand is moved away*).
- Auscultatory **disappearance of peristalsis** .
- **A drop in blood pressure , an increase in heart rate, pallor and even cyanosis of the face** .

### Paralytic ileus

*Subjectively :*

- **Weaker pains** from bowel and abdominal wall distension, colic pains are not present.
- **Gases and stools do not pass** .

*Objectively :*

- **History** : we are interested in concurrent renal or biliary colic , post-operative conditions, intoxication, etc.
- The abdomen is **evenly inflated** .
- Aurally "**dead silence**" .
- **The patient is in a relatively good condition** (blood pressure, heart rate, body temperature – normal).

## Spastic ileus

Spastic ileus is very rare, usually it cannot be distinguished from mechanical ileus (until intraoperatively).

*Objectively :*

- **Anamnesis** : we are interested in concurrent CNS diseases.
- **General condition good** (unlike mechanical ileus, which spastic ileus otherwise resembles).
- **The symptoms subside after the administration of an antispasmodic** .

## Vascular ileus

*Subjectively :*

- **Sharp to shocking pain** .
- From the beginning **reflex vomiting** .
- **Loose stool with blood admixture** appears .

*Objectively :*

- **History** : we are interested in heart or vascular diseases.
- **Increase in heart rate, decrease in blood pressure** .

## The pathological basis of ileus and its determination

1. **Hernias** (it is necessary to visually and palpate the inguinal, femoral and umbilical regions).
2. **Adhesions** (here it is necessary to pay attention to scars after previous operations; in addition to adhesions, remember the possibility of a hernia in the scar).
3. **Tumor** (mainly rectosigmoid – colorectal carcinoma ; older age, digestive difficulties – alternating constipation and diarrhoea, resistance, examination per rectum ).
4. **Intussusception** (especially in children; violent colicky pains, early vomiting, blood and mucus in the stool - "raspberry jelly", palpable resistance under the liver and an empty P lower abdomen - Dance's sign).
5. **Biliary ileus** (in elderly women with long-term gallbladder problems; pneumobilia on X- ray ).

## Links

### Related Articles

- Differential diagnosis of inflammatory and ileous NPB
- Objective symptoms of sudden abdominal events
- Subjective symptoms of sudden abdominal events
- Signs of peritoneal irritation

### External links

- Ileus from the surgeon's point of view — interactive algorithm + test ([https://www.akutne.cz/algorithm/cs/294-  
-/](https://www.akutne.cz/algorithm/cs/294-/))
- As. MD Petr Růžička: Ileotic sudden abdominal events E-learning