



A guide to...

Mesenteric Lymphadenitis

Patient Information

Children's Emergency Department (CED)

Watford General Hospital



Caring for your child with mesenteric lymphadenitis

Your child has been diagnosed with mesenteric lymphadenitis

We are happy that your child is well enough to be taken home under your supervision.

What is it?

Mesenteric lymphadenitis is usually a mild condition where an inflammation of the glands (lymph nodes) in the tummy causes pain. It is very common in those under 16 years old.

Most people are familiar with the lymph nodes in the neck that can also get bigger during infection, but many are unaware that these are also found throughout the body. They are an important part of the immune system and their job is to filter lymphatic fluid as it flows through them, trapping any bacteria, viruses or other foreign substances, which are then destroyed by the white blood cells.

During an infection, these lymph nodes swell and become painful. They go back to normal once the infection is over. Most cases are due to a virus and are not treatable with antibiotics.

How is it diagnosed?

There is no specific test to diagnose this condition, it is based on the history and physical examination undertaken by the clinician.

They may have asked for other investigations such as blood tests, urine tests or an ultrasound scan; in some instances you may be required to stay for a short period of observation and you may even be reviewed by the surgical team as the symptoms of mesenteric lymphadenitis can mimic those of appendicitis.

Normal Symptoms

- Abdominal pain—usually central position but often found on the lower right side.
- Fever and feeling of general unwellness.
- Nausea and /or diarrhoea.
- There may have been a preceding sore throat or cold type illness prior to the abdominal pain starting.
- Symptoms usually resolve within a few days, but can last up to two weeks.

RED FLAG (worrying) symptoms

- Worsening pain that is not managed by usual over the counter medication eg, paracetamol / ibuprofen.
- Pain moves to lower right side of abdomen
- Inability to tolerate any oral intake
- Green vomits
- You become more concerned

Please see separate advice leaflet for 'fever' if relevant.

Care of your child

Most children can be managed at home under the supervision of their parent / carer.

- Analgesia—simple over the counter medication such as paracetamol and / or ibuprofen are effective when given regularly for pain, if age appropriate and as recommended by your clinician.
- If a bacterial infection is suspected, then this may be treated with antibiotics; this is rarely required.
- Encourage regular fluids, and small frequent meals.

If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01923 217 187** or email **westherts.pals@nhs.uk**



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