

## Let's Talk About...

# Liver, spleen, and kidney injuries

Injuries to the belly can cause a lot of problems. There are important organs in that area that help digest and filter toxins in the blood. When a child takes a blow to the belly, one of the three “solid” organs in the belly: the liver, spleen, and kidney, can be injured. It may be important for you to understand what will happen to your child in the hospital and how they will be treated.

Depending on what organs are injured, your child may have a different set of tests. Injuries to the liver or spleen will focus on if your child is bleeding internally. Whereas an injury to their kidney's will look for signs of blood in their urine.

### What happens if my child injures their liver or spleen?

When a child has an injury to their liver and spleen, it can cause bleeding into the belly. The liver and spleen are important because they filter the blood, and the liver produces bile. Bile is important in

digestion. Your child may need to stay in the hospital for a few days while healthcare providers watch for signs of bleeding.

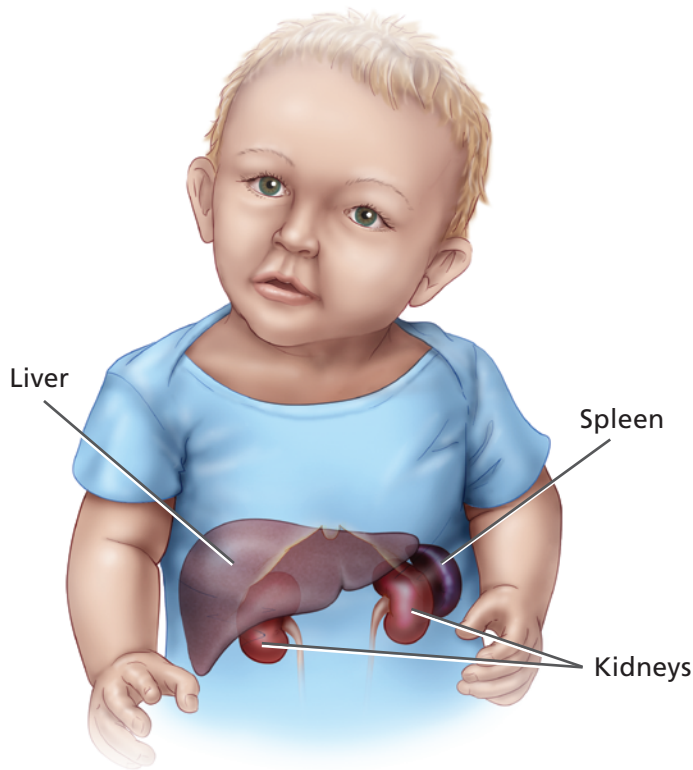
### What happens if my child injures their kidneys?

Children who injure their kidney's may cause them to not work correctly. The kidneys filter the blood and make urine to remove waste from the body. If your child injures their kidneys, their healthcare providers will watch the amount and color of urine to make sure the kidneys are filtering the blood correctly.

### What tests will my child have to diagnose liver, spleen, and kidney injuries?

Your child's healthcare provider will order a special x-ray called a CT (computerized tomography) scan to see if your child's solid organs are injured. These images help the healthcare provider understand the severity of the injury.





## Will my child have other treatments while in the hospital?

### Breathing exercises

Your child will have deep breathing exercises in the hospital. If your child lies in bed and doesn't breathe deeply, often because of pain, they can get pneumonia. Older children use an incentive spirometer, a tool that tests how deeply they breathe. Younger children blow bubbles or use pinwheels. You can help your child do these exercises often while they are awake.

### Nutrition

Your child should be able to drink clear liquids when they are admitted to the hospital. Then healthcare providers will slowly add solid foods as your child can handle them. Your child will receive fluids through an IV (small tube placed in the vein) to keep them hydrated until they are drinking well. An injury to the belly can make the intestines stop working, so it is common for children to feel nauseated. Your child's healthcare provider can give your child medicine to help with nausea.

### Activity

When your child first goes to the hospital, they can usually get out of bed only to go to the bathroom. This prevents more bleeding in the belly. When the blood count level stabilizes, your child can get out of bed more often and for a longer amount time.

When your child goes home from the hospital, they should only walk. Do not let your child do activities with contact or quick movement, including:

- Lifting heavy objects
- Running
- Biking
- Jumping on a trampoline
- Riding a horse or ATV
- Playing contact sports

Your child will have blood tests to check their blood count level. This is to find out how much bleeding has happened and if your child is bleeding inside. Your child will need this blood test every 6 hours until the blood count level does not change.

If your child's kidneys are injured, they may need other blood tests to see how well the kidneys are working.

## How long will my child be in the hospital?

Before your child can leave the hospital, they must be able to do the following:

- Have a stable blood count level
- Eat and drink without throwing up
- Walk around
- Take medicine by mouth
- Control their pain

If your child has severe injuries, they may be in the pediatric intensive care unit (PICU) for 1–2 days. In rare cases, your child may need surgery to stop the bleeding. They may also need a blood transfusion because of blood loss.

