Peritonitis
in children getting dialysis

What is it?

The organs in the belly are covered by a lining called the peritoneum. This lining is like the thin skin around sections of an orange. Sometimes, peritoneal dialysis can make this peritoneum lining irritated and swollen. The lining may also get infected with germs. This is called peritonitis (pear-ee-tuh-NYE-tis).

What are the signs and symptoms of peritonitis?

A child with peritonitis may have one or several symptoms, including:
- belly pain
- belly tender to the touch
- swollen belly
- sick to the stomach
- throwing up
- loose stools
- fever
- chills
- cloudy dialysis fluid
- pus from the site of the dialysis catheter

A child with peritonitis may have belly pain.
What do I do if I think my child has peritonitis?

If your child has any symptom of peritonitis:

Call the nurse or doctor right away.

On weekdays from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm, call the nurse at the dialysis center at 602-933-4726 or 602-933-4719 or 602-933-2039. When the dialysis center is closed, call the Nephrologists’ office at 602-903-1532 to speak to the Nephrologist on call.

Do not give your child antibiotics until you
— call the nurse or doctor, who will tell you what to do next.
— get a sample bag to be tested.

The doctor needs to know what kind of germ your child has, so your child can be given the right antibiotic.

How is peritonitis treated?

The goal of treatment is to get rid of the germs with an antibiotic.

If your child has a lot of pain, the nurse or doctor may tell you to fill then drain right away, with manual bags of 1.5% solution, 2 or 3 times. This is called a flush.

Your dialysis team will tell you how to treat your child’s peritonitis. They will decide if your child can be treated at home or needs to go to the hospital.

What can I do to prevent peritonitis?

Most infections are caused by germs normally found on the skin. You may prevent infection by keeping germs away from the catheter.

1. Put on a mask.
2. Wash your hands with soap and water for 3 minutes, rinse, and dry them.
3. After you wash your hands, touch only the PD equipment or supplies. Don’t touch the sterile parts. If you touch something else, wash your hands again. Sometimes, you cannot prevent peritonitis.
Now that you’ve read this:

☐ Tell your nurse or doctor the signs and symptoms of peritonitis.  
   (Check when done.)
☐ Tell your nurse or doctor what you would do if your child had any of the signs of 
   peritonitis. (Check when done.)
☐ Tell your nurse or doctor where you will keep your peritonitis kit so you could 
   easily find it. (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
602-933-1400
866-933-6459
www.phoenixchildrens.org
Facebook: facebook.com/theemilycenter
Twitter: @emilycenter
Pinterest: pinterest.com/emilycenter

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.
Peritonitis in children getting dialysis

Name of Health Care Provider: _______________________________
Date returned: ________________ ☐ db

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?

Si usted desea esta información en español, por favor pidársela a su enfermero o doctor. #540
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.

The Emily Center  602-933-1395
Health Education Specialist
Phoenix Children’s Hospital
1919 East Thomas Road
Phoenix, AZ 85016-7710

Thank you for helping us!