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The following slides were presented during the educational portion of IFFGD's 2020 Virtual Advocacy Event. To view this presentation and the all videos available during this program, please visit https://bit.ly/Adv_Edu.

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The Best Ways To Describe Pain So Your Healthcare Practitioner Understands

Darren M. Brenner, MD, AGAF, FACG

Associate Professor of Medicine and Surgery

Irene D. Pritzker Research Scholar

Director—Northwestern Neurogastromotility and Functional Bowel Programs

Director—Mott's Tonelli GI Physiology Laboratory

Northwestern University—Feinberg School of Medicine

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Why is An Accurate Description of Pain Important?

Table 1. Leading Gastrointestinal Symptoms Prompting an Ambulatory Visit in the United States, 2014

Rank	Symptoms	Estimated no. of annual visits		
		Office visits	ED	Total
1	Abdominal pain	10,705,448	11,135,099	21,840,547
2	Vomiting	1,725,616	2,936,210	4,661,826
3	Diarrhea	2,423,825	994,454	3,418,279
4	Nausea	1,063,883	2,004,732	3,068,615
5	Bleeding	2,147,949	606,970	2,754,919
6	Constipation	1,086,452	511,317	1,597,769
7	Anorectal symptoms ^a	928,119	220,585	1,148,704
8	Heartburn and indigestion ^a	878,808	63,485	942,293
9	Decreased appetite ^{a,b}	564,112	94,685	658,797
10	Dysphagia ^a	537,975	88,731	626,706
Total	—	—	—	40,718,455

Table 2. Leading Physician Diagnoses in the Ambulatory Setting for Gastrointestinal, Liver, and Pancreatic Disorders in the United States, 2014

Diagnosis	Estimated no. of annual visits		
	Office visits	ED	Total
Abdominal pain	8,565,933	7,906,926	16,472,859
Gastroesophageal reflux disease/reflux esophagitis	5,235,107	325,666	5,560,773
Nausea and vomiting	1,935,544	2,943,220	4,878,764
Diarrhea	2,173,179	800,794	2,973,973
Gastritis and dyspepsia	2,398,740	462,065	2,860,805
Abdominal wall and inguinal hernia	2,548,881	236,684	2,785,565
Constipation	1,746,404	771,058	2,517,462
Hemorrhoids	2,237,642	246,623	2,484,265
Diverticular disease of the colon	1,748,508	172,462	1,920,970
Malignant neoplasm of the colon or rectum ^a	1,621,053	28,852	1,649,905
Cholelithiasis	1,126,944	466,832	1,593,776
Lower GI hemorrhage	1,269,312	191,724	1,461,036
Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis ^a	1,003,102	41,934	1,045,036
Ulcerative colitis ^a	935,150	21,953	957,103
Dysphagia ^a	861,769	43,172	904,941
Pancreatitis, acute and chronic ^a	562,048	195,113	757,161
Appendicitis ^a	523,524	212,046	735,570
Hepatitis C infection ^a	709,338	3,643	712,981
Crohn's disease ^a	642,547	42,399	684,946
Irritable bowel syndrome ^a	585,061	18,638	603,699
Benign neoplasm of colon and rectum ^{a,b}	332,191	—	332,191
Barrett's esophagus ^a	274,482	—	274,482
Celiac disease ^{a,b}	190,381	—	190,381
Hepatitis, unspecified ^{a,b}	24,088	9,775	33,863
Total	—	—	54,392,507

Peery et al. Gastroenterology 2019;156:254-272.

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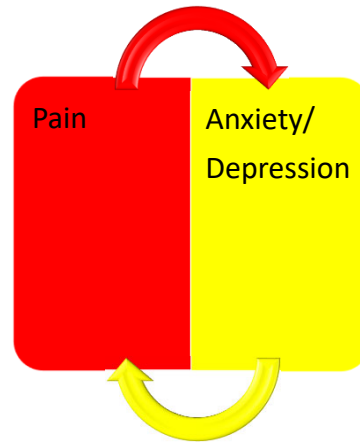
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Pain Defined

- Standard Definition:

- Localized or generalized unpleasant bodily sensations that cause physical discomfort and/or emotional distress and typically results from bodily disorders

Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online: Accessed 6/2020

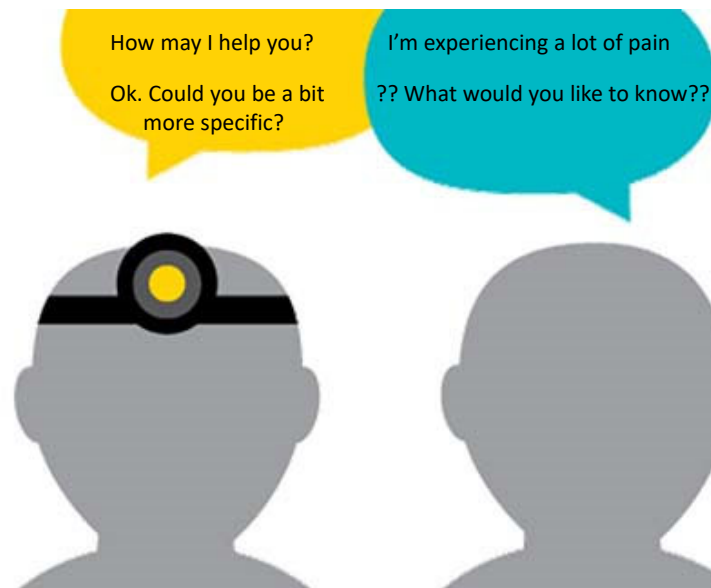


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Discussion Pain With Your Practitioner



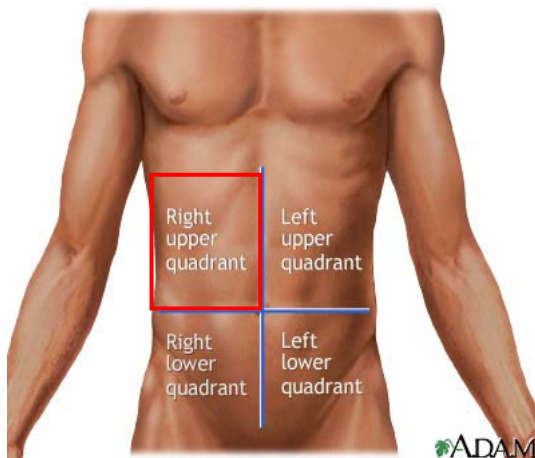
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The P, Q, R, S, T + E & A

- **P**osition
- **Q**uality
- **R**adiation
- **S**everity
- **T**iming
- + **E**xacerbating & **A**lleviating factors

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POSITION

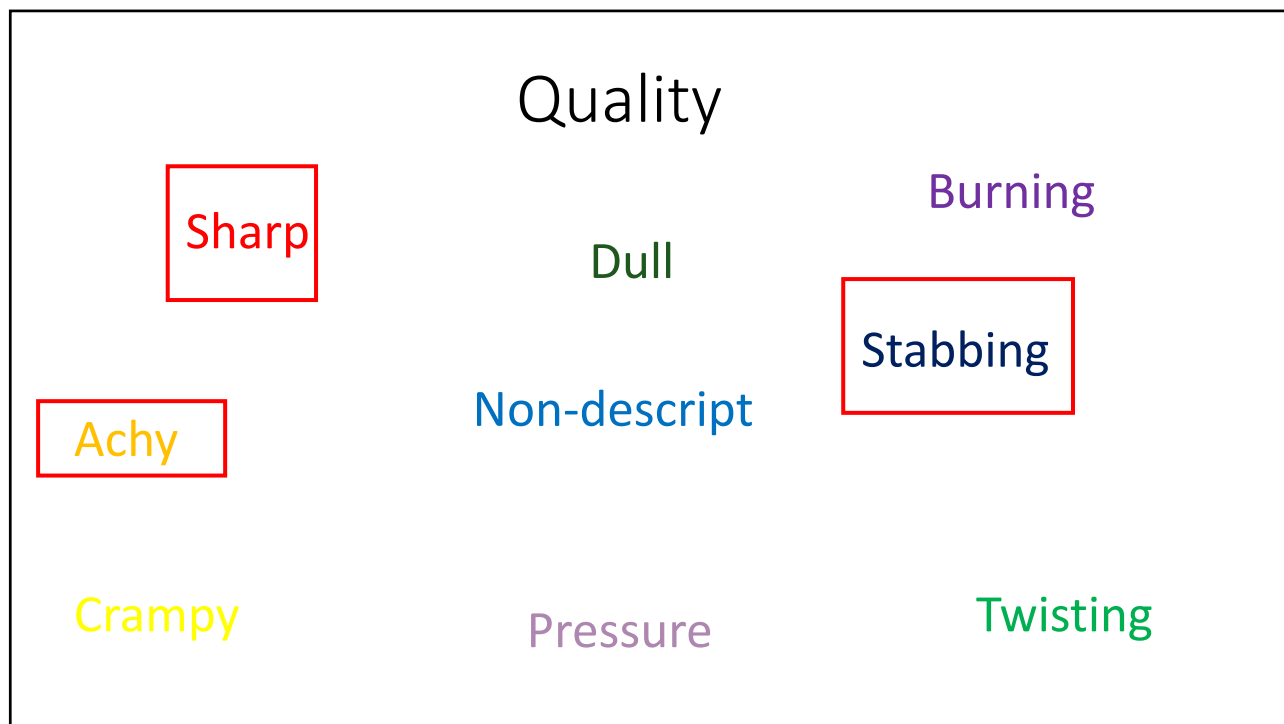


Right		Left
Gallstones Stomach Ulcer Pancreatitis	Stomach Ulcer Heartburn/ Indigestion Pancreatitis, Gallstones Epigastric hernia	Stomach Ulcer Duodenal Ulcer Biliary Colic Pancreatitis
Kidney stones Urine Infection Constipation Lumbar hernia	Pancreatitis Early Appendicitis Stomach Ulcer Inflammatory Bowel Small bowel Umbilical hernia	Kidney Stones Diverticular Disease Constipation Inflammatory bowel disease
Appendicitis Constipation Pelvic Pain (Gynae) Groin Pain (Inguinal Hernia)	Urine infection Appendicitis Diverticular disease Inflammatory bowel Pelvic pain (Gynae)	Diverticular Disease Pelvic pain (Gynae) Groin Pain (Inguinal Hernia)

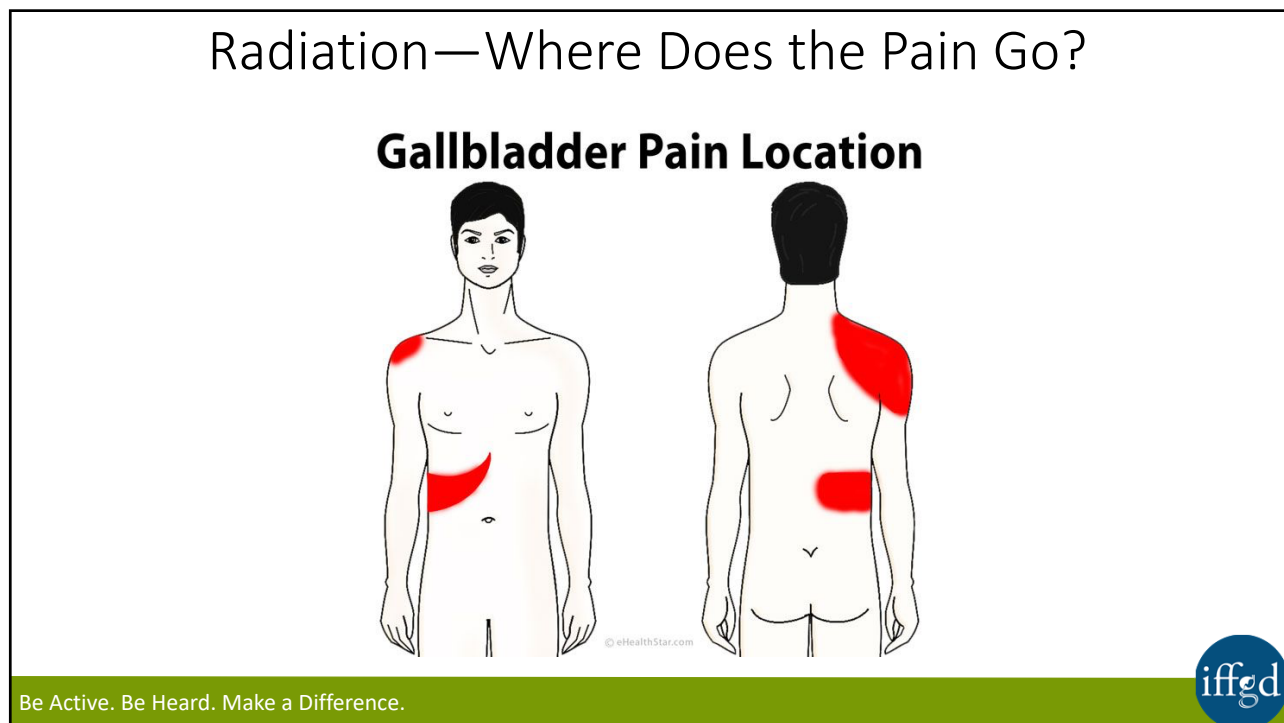
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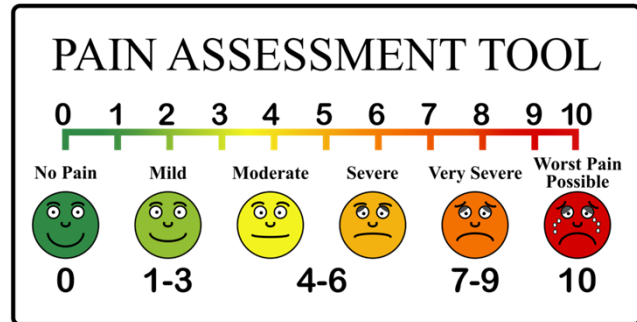


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Severity—How Bad Is The Pain?

0-10 SCALE OF PAIN SEVERITY

Severity	Description of Experience
10 Unable to Move	I am in bed and can't move due to my pain. I need someone to take me to the emergency room to get help for my pain.
9 Severe	My pain is all that I can think about. I can barely talk or move because of the pain.
8 Intense	My pain is so severe that it is hard to think of anything else. Talking and listening are difficult.
7 Unmanageable	I am in pain all the time. It keeps me from doing most activities.
6 Distressing	I think about my pain all of the time. I give up many activities because of my pain.
5 Distracting	I think about my pain most of the time. I cannot do some of the activities I need to do each day because of the pain.
4 Moderate	I am constantly aware of my pain but I can continue most activities.
3 Uncomfortable	My pain bothers me but I can ignore it most of the time.
2 Mild	I have a low level of pain. I am aware of my pain only when I pay attention to it.
1 Minimal	My pain is hardly noticeable.
0 No Pain	I have no pain.

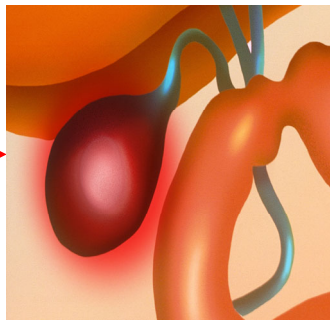


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Timing—When Does The Pain Occur?



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Exacerbating & Alleviating Factors

- What triggers the pain or causes it to be worse?
- What makes it feel better?
- Biliary Colic:
 - Exacerbating factors → Eating esp fatty foods/meals
 - Alleviating factors → Time

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Piecing It All Together

- Position → Right Upper Quadrant
- Quality → Sharp-stabbing/Achy
- Radiation → Center of chest/Rt back or shoulder
- Severity → Worst first 30-60 min then decreases over next few hours
- Timing → Usually after a meal (fatty foods)
- Exacerbating & Alleviating factors → Eating and time

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Don't Forget The Last Important Piece

Quality of Life

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Summary

- Pain is both the most common symptom leading to a GI evaluation and the diagnoses made by GI practitioners
- A good history can help differentiate between the multitude of causes for abdominal pain
- Providing your practitioner with the PQRST + E&As may lead to an efficient diagnostic and treatment strategy
- Make sure you describe how the pain is impacting your quality of life.

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