Small Bowel Obstruction

Your exam shows you have a blockage or obstruction of your bowel. The small bowel, or intestine, is a long, coiled tube that connects the stomach to the colon. Its job is to take fluids and foods you ingest into the blood stream. Symptoms of a small bowel obstruction include abdominal cramps and pain, bloated stomach and vomiting. There are many causes of intestinal blockage. The most common causes include:

- Adhesions (internal scars from previous surgery that kink the bowel).
- Constipation.
- Hernias, tumors, or bowel inflammation (enteritis and colitis).

The diagnosis of bowel obstruction comes from the history, exam, and x-ray or CT. Treatment depends on the cause and the severity of the blockage. Complete obstruction requires hospital care for bowel rest and IV fluids. **Surgery may be required to relieve the blockage if it persists**. Bowel obstruction from a hernia may also require surgery.

At the present time your condition does not require hospital care. You should get plenty of rest, and stick to clear liquids until your condition improves over the next few days. Try to take in at least 2-3 quarts per day. Avoid solid foods until you are much better. If you are constipated, an enema or a laxative may be given. Treatment may also include medicines to control pain and vomiting.

Call your doctor or go to the emergency room immediately if you have any of the following more serious symptoms:

- **Increased pain, severe bloating, repeated vomiting, or vomiting blood.**
- **Dehydration, fever, confusion, extreme weakness, or fainting.**

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