Abdominal Pain (Fù Tòng)
Any subjective, unpleasant and painful sensation in the abdominal region. Defined as the area below the epigastrium to the suprapubic margin.

- Abdominal pain can be a symptom of many disorders involving various organs.
- Gynecologic pathology, traumatic injuries, and surgical conditions can all cause abdominal pain.
- Proper identification of situations requiring urgent referral is crucial (e.g., ectopic pregnancy, bowel obstruction, perforated ulcers, acute peritonitis, necrotic pancreatitis, and acute appendicitis).
- Improper treatment due to misdiagnosis will mask symptoms and place the patient at risk for serious complications and even death.

Relevant Biomedical Diseases
- Enteritis
- Intestinal Tumor
- Pancreatitis
- Cholecystitis
- Appendicitis
- Fecal Impaction
- Diverticulitis

Etiology and Pathology
Invasion of Exogenous Pathogens: pathogenic cold, summer-heat, or damp heat -> obstruction in SP/ST & intestines -> abdominal pain

Improper Diet: excessive consumption of cold or raw foods, excessive intake of fatty, greasy, or spicy foods, over eating -> food retention in the middle jiao & failure of SP to transform & transport abdominal pain

Emotional Disturbance -> Liver Qi stagnation causing Qi stagnation -> Blood stasis, or Liver and SP/ST disharmony -> Qi stagnation and Blood stasis -> abdominal pain

Miscellaneous: surgery or traumatic injury -> Qi stagnation and Blood stasis -> abdominal pain

Constitutional yang vacuity, chronic illness, or taxation fatigue -> lack of warmth and nourishment in fu organs -> abdominal pain

Differential Dx of Abdominal Pain
Abdominal Pain (Fù Tòng): Pain is usually felt lower (between/around umbilicus and pubic bone)
Epigastric Pain (Wèi Tòng): Pain is usually felt higher (between umbilicus and sternocostal angle)

Dysentery, abdominal masses, intestinal abscess, and hernia may all present with abdominal pain. However, they also exhibit unique and characteristic symptoms by which they can be differentiated from abdominal pain.

- Dysentery: manifests with abdominal pain and tenesmus as well as severe diarrhea with purulent blood and mucus in the stool.
- Abdominal masses: abdominal pain will be accompanied by visible or palpable abdominal masses which may be hard or soft
- Intestinal abscess: characterized by pain in the right lower quadrant, rebound tenderness, muscle guarding and rigidity, and flexing of right lower extremity with pressure to the abdomen
- Hernia: lower abdominal pain that radiates from the inguinal region to the genitalia; pain may be relieved by warmth; protrusion of abdominal wall may be evident
Distinguishing Vacuity Patterns from Repletion Patterns
Vacuity Patterns: Pain decreases with pressure, Pain increases with hunger
Repletion Patterns: Pain aggravated by pressure, Pain aggravated by pressure or after meals

Distinguishing Cold Patterns from Heat Patterns
Cold Patterns: Pain alleviated by warmth
Heat Patterns: Pain alleviated by cold

Distinguishing Qi Stagnation from Blood Stasis Patterns
Qi Stagnation Patterns: Distending, migrating pain
Blood Stasis Patterns: Fixed, stabbing pain

Abdominal Pain: Determining Organ Involvement
Pain localized at the lower flank radiating to the hypochondria: Liver and Gallbladder
Pain in the the suprapubic area and periumbilical region: Spleen, Kidney, and Bladder

Acupuncture for Abdominal Pain
Cold Evil: CV 12, LI 4, CV 8, ST 25, ST 34, ST 36, SP4, SP 15 + moxa
Damp-Heat: LI 11, ST 25, ST 37, BL 25, SP 9
Food Stagnation: CV 12, ST 21, ST 25, ST 36
LV Qi Stag.: LV 3, PC 6, CV 17, GB 34, CV 10, LV 14
Blood Stasis: LV 3, CV 17, BL 17, SP 6, SP 10
Yang Vacuity: BL 20, BL 21, CV 12, CV 6, ST 36, SP 6 + moxa

Clinical Tips for Treating Abdominal Pain
It is important to rule out all possible non-medical diagnoses before treatment. Abdominal pain can be a symptom of many disorders involving various organs. Gynecologic pathology, surgical conditions, and traumatic injuries all can induce abdominal pain and confuse the diagnosis. Prompt diagnosis and identification of urgent and critical pathology are important to guide the treatments. Improper treatments due to misdiagnosis will mask symptoms, placing the patient at serious risk for complications or even death.

Conservative medical measures are not adequate for gynecological, obstetrical, or surgical conditions such as ectopic pregnancy, bowel obstruction, perforated peptic ulcers, acute peritonitis, necrotic pancreatitis, and acute appendicitis.
TCM Pattern Differentiation

**Obstruction by Cold Evil in the Middle Jiao**
- **Signs:** sudden and severe abdominal pain relieved by warmth and aggravated by cold
- **Symptoms:** no thirst, usually loose stools but possibly constipation, copious, clear urine
- **Tongue:** white, greasy tongue coating
- **Pulse:** deep, tight
- **Treatment Principles:** Warm the Middle Jiao, disperse Cold, regulate Qi, relieve pain
- **Herbal Treatment:** Liang Fu Wan (Lesser Galangal and Cyperus Pill) [Gao liang jiang (10g), Xiang fu (10g)]

**Obstruction by Damp-Heat**
- **Signs:** abdominal distention worse w/ pressure, constipation or incomplete/difficult defecation w/ sticky stools, chest fullness
- **Symptoms:** irritability, thirst, scanty dark urine, possible fever or sweating
- **Tongue:** yellow, greasy tongue coating
- **Pulse:** slippery, rapid
- **Treatment Principle:** Clear Heat, transform Dampness, promote bowel movement
- **Herbal Treatment:** Da Cheng Qi Tang (Great Order the Qi Decoction) [Da huang (10g), Mang xiao (10g), Zhi shi (10g), Hou po (10g)]

**Obstruction by Food Stagnation**
- **Signs:** abdominal and distention that increases with pressure and after eating, acid regurgitation
- **Symptoms:** anorexia, nausea/vomiting, belching with foul breath, abdominal pain prior to and is relieved by defecation, loose stools/diarrhea or constipation
- **Tongue:** greasy coating
- **Pulse:** replete, slippery
- **Treatment Principle:** Disperse food, abduct stagnation, relieve pain
- **Herbal Treatment:** Bao He Wan (Harmony Preserving Pill) [Ban Xia (10g), Fu Ling (10g), Chen Pi (10g), Shan Zha (10g), Shen Qu (10g), Lai Fu Zi (10g), Lian Qiao (10g), Zhi Gan Cao (10g)]

**Stagnation of Liver Qi**
- **Signs:** abdominal pain and distention that tends to migrate and fluctuate with emotional state; may involve the epigastric and costal regions, hypochondrium and groin
- **Symptoms:** pain relieved by belching or passing gas, chest oppression, frequent sighing
- **Tongue:** thin, white coating,
- **Pulse:** wiry
- **Treatment Principle:** Soothe the Liver, regulate the flow of Qi, relieve pain
- **Herbal Treatment:** Chai Hu Shu Gan San (Bupleurum Course the Liver Decoction) [Chai Hu (10g), Xiang Fu (10g), Zhi Ke (10g), Chen Pi (10g), Bai Shao (10g), Chuan Xiong (10g), Zhi Gan Cao (3g)]

**Blood Stasis**
- **Signs:** stabbing abdominal pain with fixed location that increases with pressure
- **Symptoms:** chronic history of condition in most cases
- **Tongue:** purple
- **Pulse:** choppy
- **Treatment Principle:** Quicken the Blood, eliminate stasis, warm the channels, and relieve pain
- **Herbal Treatment:** Shao Fu Zhu Yu Tang (Lesser Abdomen Stasis Expelling Decoction) [Dang Gui (10g), Chuan Xiong (10g), Chi Shao Yao (10g), Pu Huang (10g), Wu Ling Zhi (10g), Mo Yao (5g), Yan Hu Suo (10g), Rou Gui (4g), Gan Jiang (5g), Xiao Hui Xiang (5g.)]

**Yang vacuity of the Stomach and the Spleen**
- **Signs:** mild, dull and intermittent abdominal pain that is relieved by warmth and pressure and increases with hunger or fatigue (improves with eating and rest)
- **Symptoms:** loose stool, lusterless complexion, listlessness, aversion to cold, shortness of breath
- **Tongue:** pale tongue with possible tooth-marks, thin, white coating
- **Pulse:** deep, fine and slow pulse
- **Treatment Principle:** Warm and supplement Yang, relieve pain
- **Herbal Treatment:** Xiao Jian Zhong Tang (Minor Center Fortifying Decoction) [Yi tang (30g), Gui Zhi (6g), Bai Shao Yao (10g), Zhi Gan Cao (3g), Da Zao (10 pc.), Sheng jiang (6 slices)]