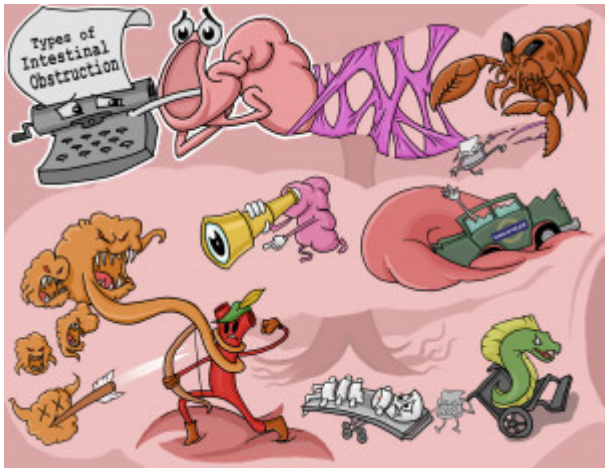
Types of Intestinal Obstruction

An intestinal obstruction occurs when the contents of the gastrointestinal tract cannot pass through the intestines. Obstructions can be either mechanical, involving an identifiable blockage, or non-mechanical, having neuromuscular or vascular origins.



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Mechanical

Adhesions
Adhesive-tissue
Adhesions are areas of scar tissue that develop on the outside of the intestine after surgery, or injury to the bowel. Initially, adhesions may not be troublesome; however, movement of the intestine can stretch the scar tissue into a long band. This band of tissue may eventually encircle the intestine, and squeeze it shut causing an obstruction.

Hernia
Hermit-crab
When there is an area of weak muscle in the abdomen, a portion of the small intestine can slip through the muscle fibers causing a hernia. If the protruding hernia becomes pinched, it can cause intestinal obstruction.

Volvulus
Volvo Stuck in a Loop of Bowel
Intestinal obstruction caused by twisting of the bowel is called a volvulus. This type of obstruction can often be resolved without surgery.

Intussusception
Intestine-telescope
This type of obstruction occurs when a segment of the intestine telescopes or folds into another portion of the intestine. Currant jelly-like stools are characteristic assessment findings, along with a palpable sausage-shaped mass in the RUQ. Intussusception is a medical emergency.

Tumor
Tumor-guy
Intestinal tumors can grow inside the intestine, creating a blockage, or they can develop outside the intestine, pinching it closed.

Non-Mechanical

Mesenteric Artery Occlusion
Mesenteric Archery-artery Occluded
Intestinal obstruction resulting from an arterial occlusion is rare. In most cases, an embolus disrupts blood flow to an area of the intestine, causing a non-mechanical blockage.

Spinal Injury
Spine Injured
Injury to the spinal cord that disrupts the signals from the brain to the intestines can disrupt peristalsis, causing paralytic ileus.

Paralytic Ileus
Wheelchair Eel
This type of obstruction occurs when intestinal peristalsis is absent; assessment will reveal a lack of bowel sounds. Paralytic ileus is common after surgery.

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