

Small Bowel Obstruction (SBO)

Small Bowel Obstruction (SBO) refers to a blockage or partial obstruction of the small intestine, which prevents the normal passage of contents, including food, liquids, and gas, through the digestive tract. SBO can be acute or chronic and can be caused by a variety of conditions. It is a medical emergency and requires prompt diagnosis and treatment.

Causes of Small Bowel Obstruction:

- Adhesions
- Hernias
- Tumors
- Crohn's Disease
- Intussusception
- Volvulus
- Infectious or Inflammatory Conditions
- Foreign Bodies
- Strictures

Symptoms of Small Bowel Obstruction:

- Abdominal Pain
- Nausea and Vomiting
- Projectile vomiting may occur in severe cases.
- Abdominal Distension
- Constipation and Lack of Gas
- Absence of passing gas or stool (especially in complete obstruction).
- Diarrhea
- Fever
- Signs of Dehydration

Diagnosis of Small Bowel Obstruction:

- Clinical Assessment & Nasogastric Tube (NGT) Decompression:
- Laboratory Tests:
- Imaging
 - CECT Scan
 - Ultrasound
 - Contrast Studies (less common nowadays)

Management of Small Bowel Obstruction:

1. Initial Stabilization:

- IV fluids: The first step in management is rehydration to correct dehydration and electrolyte imbalances (e.g., normal saline or lactated Ringer's solution).
- Electrolyte correction: Administer potassium, sodium, and other electrolytes as necessary.
- Nasogastric tube (NGT) insertion: Decompress the stomach, relieve vomiting, and reduce bowel distension.

2. Conservative Management

3. Surgical Intervention: If there is no improvement with conservative treatment, or if signs of strangulation, ischemia, or perforation occur, surgery is indicated.

- Diagnostic Laparoscopy
- Exploratory laparotomy: A surgical procedure where the abdomen is opened to identify and address the cause of obstruction (e.g., removing a tumor, fixing a hernia, or resolving adhesions).
- Resection: If the obstruction is due to a tumor or severe bowel damage, the affected portion of the small intestine may be removed.
- Strictureplasty: For narrowing of the bowel due to Crohn's disease or scarring, the obstructed segment may be widened surgically.
- Postoperative Care: After surgery, patients are closely monitored for complications like infection, wound healing, and recovery of bowel function.