

Causes and risk factors

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The risk factors for ileus are listed in Summary box 73.3 Postoperative ileus (POI) occurs in 10–20% of patients undergoing elective major abdominal surgery and is usually defined by a failure to tolerate oral intake or pass stool 72 hours after surgery. Summary box 73.3 Risk factors for ileus

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Recent surgery: POI Local in inflammation (peritonitis, severe acute pancreatitis) Systemic in inflammation by any cause, e.g. sepsis, trauma Electrolyte disturbance (especially hypokalaemia and hypercalcaemia) Acute endocrine disturbance (hypothyroidism, diabetic ketoacidosis) Medications, e.g. opioids Acute CNS disease (especially high spinal transections) Intestinal ischaemia (mesenteric vascular disease)

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