

Foreign bodies in the stomach

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A variety of ingested foreign bodies reach the stomach, and very often these can be seen on a plain radiograph. If possible, they should be removed endoscopically but, if not, most can be left to pass normally. Even objects such as needles, with which there is understandable anxiety, will seldom cause harm. In general, an object that leaves the stomach will pass spontaneously. In contrast, attempted removal at laparotomy can be very difficult as the object may be much more difficult to find than might be expected. Most adults who swallow foreign bodies have psychiatric problems and may appear to relish the attention associated with serial laparotomies. The treatment should therefore be expectant, and intervention reserved for - patients with symptoms in whom the foreign body is failing to progress.

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