

What are Peritoneal Relationships?

Worksheet

Peritoneal relationships classify abdominal organs as intraperitoneal (fully covered, mobile, has a mesentery), retroperitoneal (covered only on the anterior surface, fixed) or extraperitoneal, and define recesses like the hepatorenal pouch where fluid pools.

Questions

1. Which of these is a retroperitoneal organ?

- A) Stomach
- B) Spleen
- C) Kidney
- D) Transverse colon

2. What is the lowest point of the peritoneal cavity in a supine patient?

- A) Pouch of Douglas
- B) Hepatorenal recess (Morison's pouch)
- C) Lesser sac
- D) Paracolic gutter

3. What structure attaches intraperitoneal organs to the body wall?

- A) Ligament of Treitz
- B) Mesentery
- C) Falciform ligament only
- D) Greater omentum only

4. Which segment of colon is retroperitoneal?

- A) Transverse colon
- B) Sigmoid colon
- C) Ascending colon
- D) Cecum

5. A patient in the supine position develops a fluid collection in the deepest part of the peritoneal cavity, between the liver and right kidney. What is this space called?

6. During surgery, a segment of small bowel is found wrapped in a mesentery that allows it to move freely. Is this segment intraperitoneal or retroperitoneal?

7. A trauma patient has a laceration to the pancreas. Why is free intraperitoneal fluid not the main concern here?

8. Define: What makes an organ 'intraperitoneal'?

9. Define: What makes an organ 'retroperitoneal'?

10. Define: What is Morison's pouch?

Answer Key

1. C) Kidney - The kidneys sit behind the peritoneum, covered only on their anterior surface.
2. B) Hepatorenal recess (Morison's pouch) - In the supine position, Morison's pouch between the liver and right kidney is the lowest point.
3. B) Mesentery - A mesentery is the peritoneal fold that suspends and carries vessels to intraperitoneal organs.
4. C) Ascending colon - The ascending colon is fixed and retroperitoneal, unlike the mobile transverse and sigmoid colon.
5. In the supine position, the hepatorenal recess (pouch of Morison) is the lowest point of the peritoneal cavity on the right side. Fluid such as blood or pus naturally pools here due to gravity. Answer: the hepatorenal recess (Morison's pouch).
6. A mesentery attaches an organ to the posterior body wall while allowing movement. Organs fully surrounded by peritoneum with a mesentery are intraperitoneal. Since this bowel segment has a mesentery and moves freely, it is intraperitoneal.
7. The pancreas (except the tip of the tail) is retroperitoneal, covered by peritoneum only on its anterior surface. Injury to it leaks into the retroperitoneal space rather than directly into the peritoneal cavity. So free intraperitoneal fluid may be minimal even with significant pancreatic injury.
8. It is fully covered by peritoneum and suspended by a mesentery, making it mobile.
9. Peritoneum covers only its anterior surface; it is fixed to the posterior body wall, with no mesentery.
10. The hepatorenal recess between the liver and right kidney - the lowest point of the peritoneal cavity in the supine position, where fluid collects.

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