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Flank Anatomical Specificity

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Committee on Coding and Nomenclature

American College of Emergency Physicians

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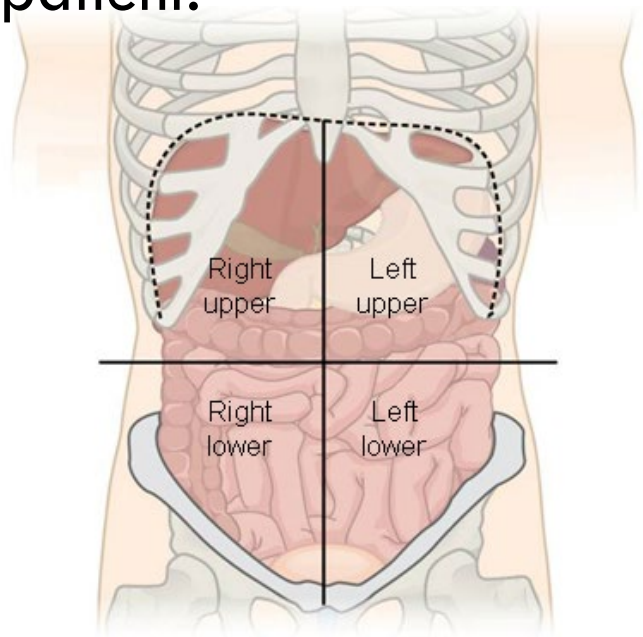
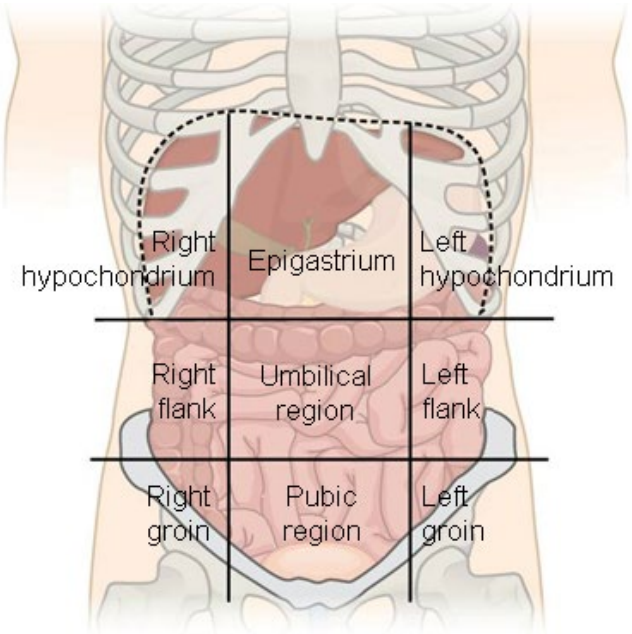
What is the "Flank"?

- The "flank" of the thorax is a unique area of the body that lies between on the lateral aspect of the thorax between the rib cage and the iliac bone of the hip
  - below the rib cage and above the ilium
    - [Alberts, D; et al. (2012). Dorland's illustrated medical dictionary (32nd ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Saunders/Elsevier. p. 714]
  - also known as "latus" or "lumbar region"
- Simply is it "the fleshy part of the side between the ribs and the hip"
    - [https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/flank]
- This is not an anterior/posterior differentiation for this area

Flank Anatomical Location

- The specific anatomical locale helps determine the clinician's evaluation process as well as resource utilization. As is noted in the illustration, division of the frontal and lateral aspects of the abdomen allows for greater specificity in evaluating the patient.





Flank Anatomical Specificity

- There are times when a patient will seek medical care because of "flank pain" as opposed to abdominal or back pain
- Pathology specific to flank pain can include
  - kidney stones
  - pyelonephritis
  - gall bladder or liver disease
  - or muscle spasm to name a few
- In addition, injuries to this area can lead to different muscle or intra-abdominal pathology

Changes to the initial proposal

- We appreciate the edits provided by NCHS to bring the proposal in-line with
  - coding conventions and
  - comments made on the initial proposal
- We feel these edits address those comments

Coding for Flank Anatomical Conditions

- We appreciate the comments for our proposal to have a specific term for "flank"
  - currently, ICD-10-CM directs the term "flank" to the abdomen
- The addition of this anatomic term will allow for better tracking of conditions that arise in this area
- The American College of Emergency Physicians requests that specific codes be added to ICD-10-CM in order to better capture and track complaints to this specific anatomic region
  - This proposal is supported by the American Academy of Pediatrics

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