

“Minor” Complaint	Emergency Condition that Shares Symptoms
Elbow pain	ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI) – heart attack
Cold foot	Aortic dissection (tear in largest blood vessel of the body)
Back pain	Ruptured abdominal aortic aneurysm
Sore throat	Retropharyngeal Abscess (collection of pus in the back of the throat, can block breathing)
Abdominal pain after eating	Vertebral artery dissection (tear in artery that provides blood to the brain)
Sniffles and a headache	Spinal fluid leak (from nose)
Burning with urination	Ruptured ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy outside uterus, usually in fallopian tube which then ruptures)
Constipation	Ischemic bowel (dying intestines from blocked blood flow)
Cough (in a sixteen-year-old)	Advanced testicular cancer with metastasis to lungs
Rash	Necrotizing fasciitis (so-called “flesh-eating bacteria”)
Sore leg	Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) – blood clot
Hurt shoulder after waterskiing	Shattered spleen
Hiccups	Myocardial infarction (heart attack)
Shoulder pain	Perforated ulcer
Dental pain	Ludwig’s angina (infection in floor of mouth that can block breathing)
Feeling tired	Sepsis (extreme inflammatory response to infection)
Headache	Subarachnoid hemorrhage (bleeding in the brain)
Hiccups for three days	Acute pancreatitis (sudden inflammation of the pancreas)
Flu-like symptoms	Bacterial endocarditis (infection of the valves of the heart)
Hemorrhoid pain	Compression of spinal cord roots
Diaper rash	Diabetic ketoacidosis (extreme high blood sugar)
Low back pain	Metastatic ovarian cancer
Cough	New onset heart failure
Nasal congestion	Brain tumor
Feeling more weak than normal	Hyperkalemia (high potassium) – acute kidney failure or result of chronic kidney disease (missing dialysis, for example)