

Ascites

Definition:

Fluid in the peritoneal cavity



Causes of ascites

(According to the type of ascitic fluid)

Straw-coloured

1. Cirrhosis
2. Congestive cardiac failure
3. Malignancy
4. Infection: TB, Following perforation, SBP
5. Hypoproteinaemia; (e.g. nephrotic syndrome)
6. Chronic pancreatitis
7. Constrictive pericarditis
8. Meigs' syndrome
9. Hepatic vein obstruction (Budd-Chiari syndrome)

Chylous



1. Obstruction of main lymphatic duct (e.g. by carcinoma)
2. Cirrhosis

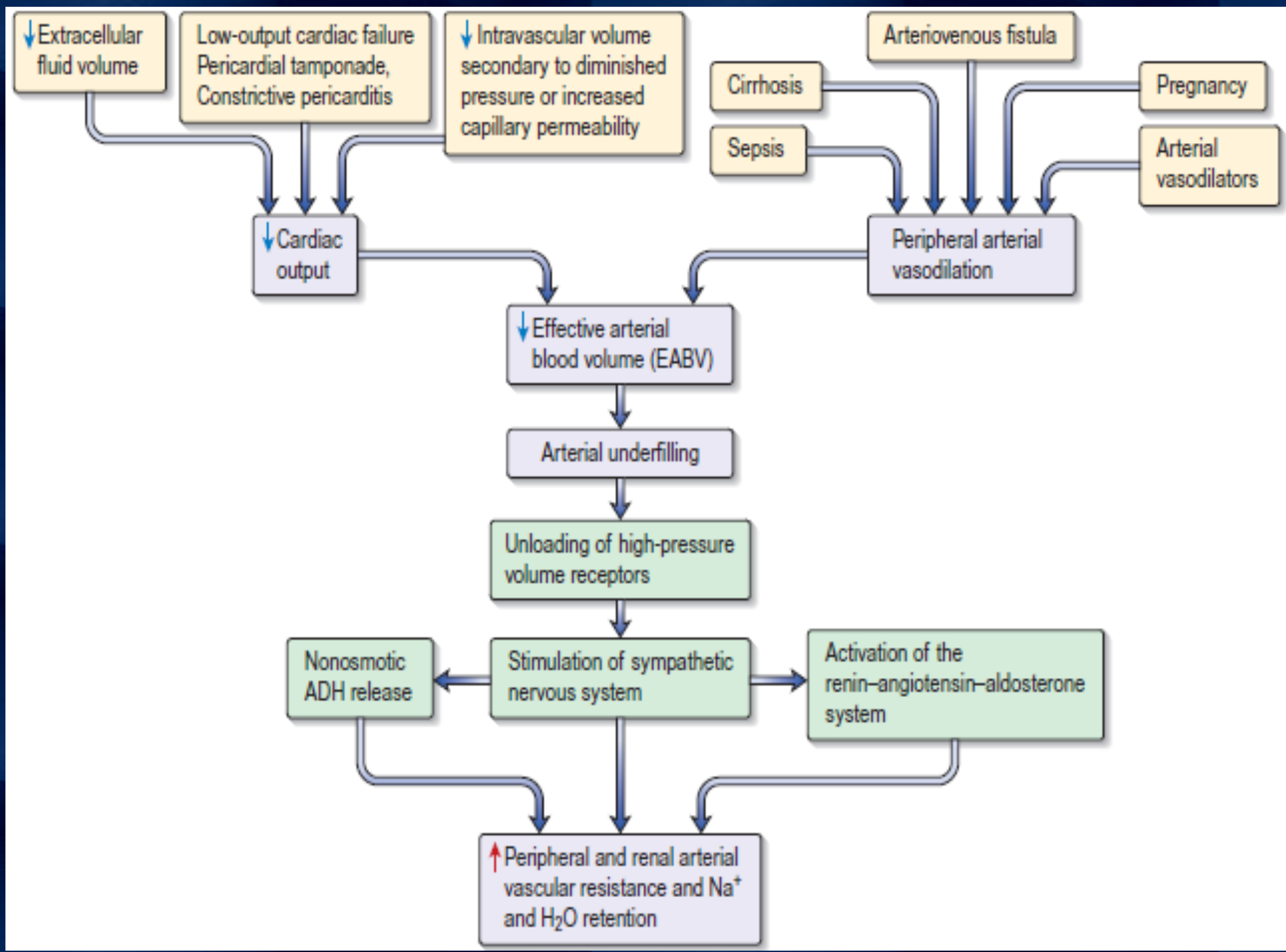
Haemorrhagic

1. Malignancy
2. Ruptured ectopic pregnancy
3. Abdominal trauma
4. Acute pancreatitis

Pathogenesis

1- Sodium and water retention:

- Nitric oxide, atrial natriuretic peptide and prostaglandins are potent vasodilators that increase in liver cirrhosis.

- They produce peripheral arterial vasodilatation and consequent reduction in the effective blood volume (that part of circulating blood volume that is effective in stimulating volume receptors).

- Activation of the sympathetic nervous system and the renin -angiotensin system, thus promoting salt and water retention.



Pathogenesis

2- Portal hypertension :

- Exerts a local hydrostatic pressure and leads to increased hepatic and splanchnic production of lymph and transudation of fluid into the peritoneal cavity.

3- Low serum albumin

- (a consequence of poor synthetic liver function) may further contribute by a reduction in plasma oncotic pressure.