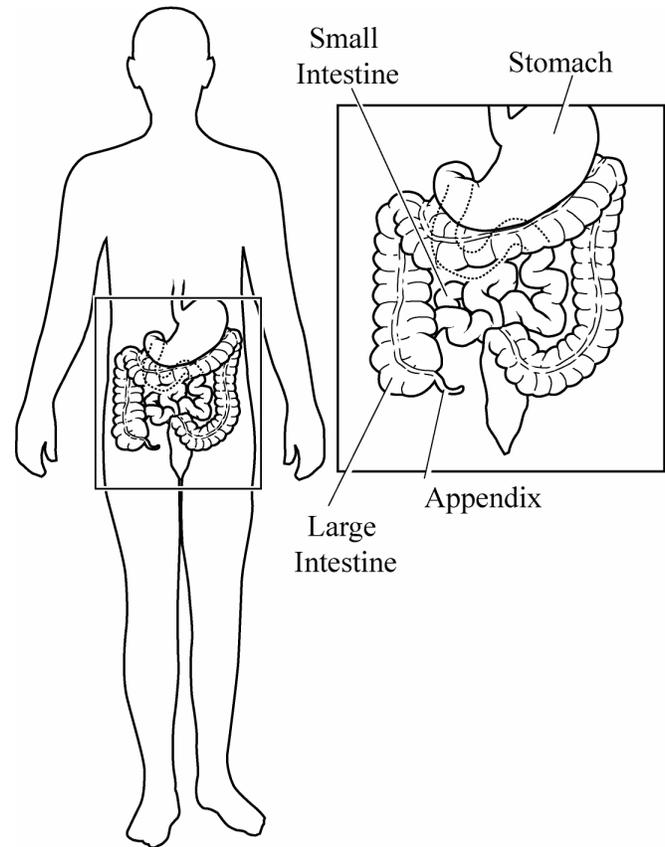


Appendectomy for a Child

Appendectomy is a surgery to remove the appendix. The appendix is a small pouch that comes off the large intestine. The appendix sometimes gets blocked and becomes infected and swollen. Signs of an infected appendix include abdominal pain in the lower right side, fever, poor appetite, nausea and vomiting. If the appendix bursts, it can make you very sick.



There are two ways to do this surgery:

- **Open appendectomy** - a single incision is made in the abdomen. The doctor works through this larger incision to remove the appendix.
- **Laparoscopic appendectomy** - 3 or 4 small incisions are made in the abdomen. The doctor uses a camera and tools through the small incisions to remove the appendix. With this type of surgery, your child may recover faster, have less pain, less scarring, fewer wound problems and often spends less time in the hospital.

To Prepare

- Tell your doctor what medicines your child is taking including prescriptions, over the counter medicines, vitamins and herbs.
- If your child has any allergies to medicines, foods or other things, tell the staff.
- Your child should have nothing more to drink until after the surgery.

During Surgery

- Your child will wear a hospital gown.
- An IV (intravenous) is put into a vein in your child's arm or leg for giving medicine and fluids.
- Your child will be taken on a cart to the surgery room. A belt may be put over your child's legs for safety.
- Your child will be given medicine so he or she will sleep through the surgery. The medicine will be given through the IV or a face mask.
- The abdomen is cleaned and sheets are put over your child to keep the surgery area clean.
- An incision is made in your child's abdomen. With laparoscopic, 3 or 4 incisions are made.
- The appendix is removed.
- The incision(s) are closed with stitches, staples or special tapes called steri-strips.
- If stitches or staples are used, a bandage is taped over them.

After Surgery

In the Hospital

- Your child is taken to the recovery room and watched closely until he or she wakes up and is doing well.
- Your child's breathing, blood pressure and pulse are checked often.
- Your doctor will talk to you about your child's surgery.
- Most children are ready to go home in 24 hours.
- Medicines given during the surgery will make your child sleepy. Your child should be watched closely for 24 hours after you go home.

At Home

- Your child should get plenty of rest.

- Give medicines as directed by your doctor.
- Call your child's doctor's office to schedule a follow up visit.
- Your child may take a shower. Do not let your child take a tub bath for one week after surgery. Remove the bandage(s) over the incision(s) when your child takes a shower or at least one time each day. Carefully wash the incisions with soap and water and pat dry. Put new band-aids over each incision. Change the band-aids any time they get wet or dirty.
- If your child has steri-strips, leave them alone. They will fall off on their own.
- It may be hard for your child to have a bowel movement after surgery. Walking and eating high fiber cereals, beans, vegetables and whole grain breads will help. Drinking a lot of liquids may also help.
- Your child may need to do deep breathing and coughing exercises to keep from getting a lung infection after surgery. Have your child deep breathe and cough every hour while awake and if he or she wakes up during the night.
- Your child should not lift objects over 10 pounds for three days.
- Talk to your child's doctor or nurse about other activity limits. Your child should be able to return to normal activities in about one week if laparoscopic surgery was done. If it was an open surgery, recovery may take longer.

Call your doctor **right away** if your child has:

- Pain in the abdomen or shoulder area that does not go away or gets worse
- Increased redness, bruising or swelling
- A fever over 101 degrees F
- Chills, a cough, or is feeling weak and achy
- Vomiting
- Skin that is itchy, swollen skin or a new rash
- Trouble having a bowel movement or has diarrhea often

Call 911 **right away** if:

- The incisions come apart.
- There is new bleeding from the incisions.
- Your child has trouble breathing all of a sudden.
- Your child has chest pain.

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.

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