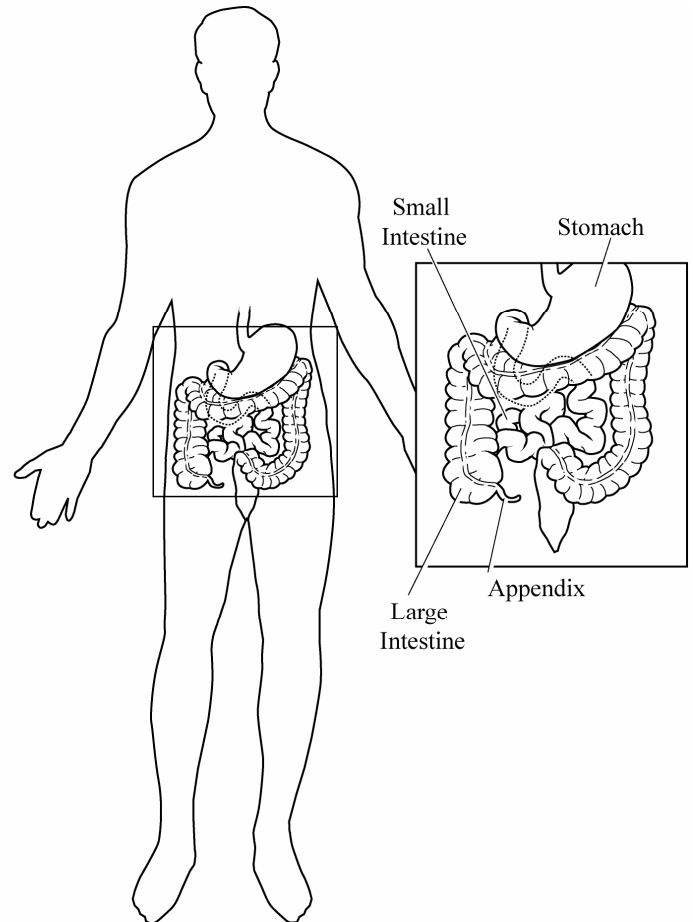


Appendectomy

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, you may recover faster, have less pain, less scarring, fewer wound problems and often spends less time in the hospital.

An adult family member or friend needs to come with you to take you home after your surgery. It is not safe for you to drive or leave alone.

To Prepare

- Tell your doctor what medicines you are taking including prescriptions, over the counter medicines, vitamins and herbs.
- If you have any allergies to medicines, foods or other things, tell the staff.
- Do not eat or drink anything, including water, until after you have your surgery.

During Surgery

- You will wear a hospital gown.
- An IV (intravenous) is put into a vein in your arm for giving medicine and fluids.
- You are taken on a cart to the surgery room. You are helped onto the surgery table. A belt may be put over your legs for your safety.
- You will be given medicine so you will sleep through the surgery. The medicine will be given through the IV or a face mask.
- Your abdomen is cleaned and sheets are put over you to keep the surgery area clean.
- An incision is made in your 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

- You are taken to the recovery room where you are watched closely until you wake up and are doing well.
- Your breathing, blood pressure and pulse are checked often.

- Your doctor will talk to you about your surgery and when you can expect to go home.
- Medicines given during the surgery will make you sleepy. You will need to have an adult family member or friend take you home for your safety.

At Home

- Rest.
- Take your medicines as directed by your doctor.
- Call your doctor to schedule a follow-up visit.
- You can take a shower. Do not take a tub bath for one week after your surgery.
- Remove the bandage(s) over the incision(s) the next day before you shower. Carefully wash the incisions with soap and water and pat them dry. Put new band-aids over your incisions. Change your band-aids any time they get wet or dirty.
- If you have steri-strips, leave them alone. They will fall off on their own.
- It may be hard for you to have a bowel movement after surgery. Walking and eating high fiber cereals, beans, vegetables and whole grain breads will help. Drinking 8 glasses of liquids each day may also help.
- You may be taught to do deep breathing and coughing exercises to keep you from getting a lung infection after surgery. Deep breathe and cough every hour while you are awake and if you wake up during the night. It may help to use a pillow to support your incision(s) when you cough or deep breathe.
- Do not lift objects over 10 pounds for three days.
- Do not drive until your doctor tells you it is okay and you are no longer taking pain medicine.
- Talk to your doctor or nurse about other activity limits. You should be able to return to normal activities in about 1 to 3 weeks.

Call your doctor **right away** if you have:

- 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.
- You have trouble breathing all of a sudden.
- You have chest pain.

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