

# Division of Pediatric General Surgery

# Appendectomy Post-operative Instructions

The appendix is a small, narrow pouch attached to the large intestine. It is in the right lower

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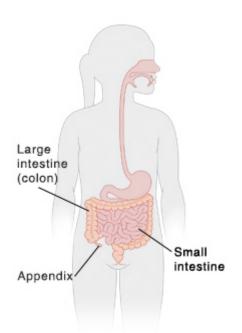
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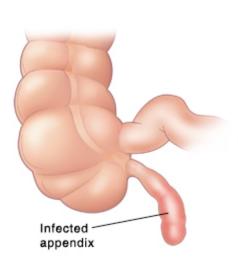


What is an appendix?

abdomen.

#### What is appendicitis?

Food and stool can get trapped within the appendix and cause it to swell and become inflamed or infected. A viral illness can also cause the appendix to swell and become blocked. The appendix must be removed before it burst or 'perforates' and spreads the infection within the abdomen



#### What are the symptoms?

The most common symptom is pain in the abdomen. Children usually first complain of pain around their umbilicus (belly button) and do not want to eat. The pain gradually moves to the right lower part of the abdomen. There may be nausea, vomiting and a small amount of diarrhea. Movement tends to make the pain worse. Children may have a slight fever at first. If the appendix perforates your child may get a high fever due to the spread of infection.

Pediatric General Surgery 1101 Madison, Suite 800 Seattle, WA 98104 206-215-2700

#### What are the treatment options?

Appendectomy is the surgery that removes the appendix. In cases of perforated/ruptured appendicitis or in other cases; the treatment may include antibiotics for a longer period of time and possible delayed surgery.

## What happens during surgery?

Before surgery your child will need an intravenous line (IV). This is a tube that goes into the blood vessel. It is an effective way to give antibiotics to protect against infection and replace fluids until your child is eating and drinking.

At the time of surgery a general anesthetic will be given to your child. The surgeon will remove the appendix either through a single small incision or by using a laparoscope. Your child may have a thin drainage tube to drain fluid from the abdomen.

#### **Care after Surgery**

If the appendix is not perforated then your child may stay in the hospital 1 to 2 days after surgery. As your child feels ready food and activity will be restarted slowly.

If the appendix is perforated your child may need to stay 5 to 10 days in the hospital. Your child will get antibiotics and fluids through the IV during this time and may go home on oral antibiotics.

#### How do I care for my child at home?

#### Incision

Keep the incision clean and dry for 48 hours

Your child can take a shower 2 days after surgery. No bath or swimming for 1 week

In most cases your child will go home with a waterproof or gauze dressing over the incision. You can remove the dressing 2 days after surgery. Small tapes (steri-strips) may be placed on the incision. These steri-strips will fall off within a couple of weeks. You may trim them if they begin to curl up.

#### Diet

Your child can eat normally at home, start with small quantities of bland food and advance as tolerated.

#### Comfort

Your child may need pain medicine for a few days at home. A gradual return to activities will help in keeping your child comfortable.

#### **Activity**

Avoid activities that strain the stomach area such as heavy lifting (backpacks), playing sports or other contact activities for about 2-4 weeks after surgery. An excuse note is available on request.

Bike riding is OK (with a helmet) after 2 weeks if pain free.

#### Return to school

Your child may return to school as soon as they feel ready.

#### Follow up

The surgeon will see your child in 1-2 weeks after leaving the hospital to make sure the incision is healing and your child is recovering well. Then your child's regular doctor will provide care.

### When do I call the doctor?

#### Vomiting

Fever (greater than 101 degrees Fahrenheit) Pain not relieved with painkillers

Increase pain and swelling around the incision site.

Redness, separation of the edges of the incision or oozing of pus or liquid or bleeding. Diarrhea lasting more than a day

Please call the pediatric surgery office at 206-215-2700 if you have any questions about pain control, infection or other concerns.

Notes	



Pediatric General Surgery 1101 Madison, Suite 800 Seattle, WA 98104 For a free physician referral: 1-800-SWEDISH (1-800-793-3474) www.swedish.org