

Appendicectomy (child)

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This fact sheet is for general information about this procedure only. It is not intended to be used as medical advice or to replace advice that your relevant healthcare professional would give you. If you have a particular medical problem, please consult a healthcare professional.

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What is an appendicectomy?

An appendicectomy is a procedure to remove your child's appendix because it is inflamed (appendicitis).

What are the benefits?

Surgery removes the inflamed appendix and allows infected pus to be washed out. The aim is to make your child better and to prevent the serious complications appendicitis can cause.

Are there any alternatives?

If your child has severe appendicitis, surgery is usually the best option. However, there may be other options in some cases.

Your surgeon may recommend a course of antibiotics to help the inflammation to settle. Your child may still need an appendicectomy and this will usually be arranged up to 6 months later.

Your surgeon may perform an ultrasound scan to find out if there is an abscess and where it is. If your child does have an abscess, your surgeon may need to perform a procedure to remove the pus, or drain the pus using a small tube.

What does the procedure involve?

The procedure is performed under a general anaesthetic and usually takes 1 to 2 hours.

Your surgeon will tie off the blood supply to the appendix, stitch the base and then remove it.

What complications can happen?

Possible complications of this procedure are shown below. Some may be serious and can even be life threatening.

General complications of any procedure

- Bleeding
- Infection of the surgical site (wound)
- Allergic reaction to the equipment, materials or medication

Specific complications of this procedure

Keyhole surgery complications

- Damage to structures such as the bowel, bladder or blood vessels
- Developing a hernia near one of the cuts
- Surgical emphysema
- Gas embolism
- Conversion to open surgery

Appendicectomy complications

- Incorrect diagnosis
- Developing an abscess within the abdomen
- Continued bowel paralysis
- Developing a leak where the appendix has been cut off from the bowel
- Developing a leak into the abdominal cavity
- Bowel obstruction
- Pylephlebitis, where infection spreads to the liver
- Stump appendicitis, where part of the appendix is left behind

Consequences of this procedure

- Pain
- Scarring of the skin, which can be unsightly

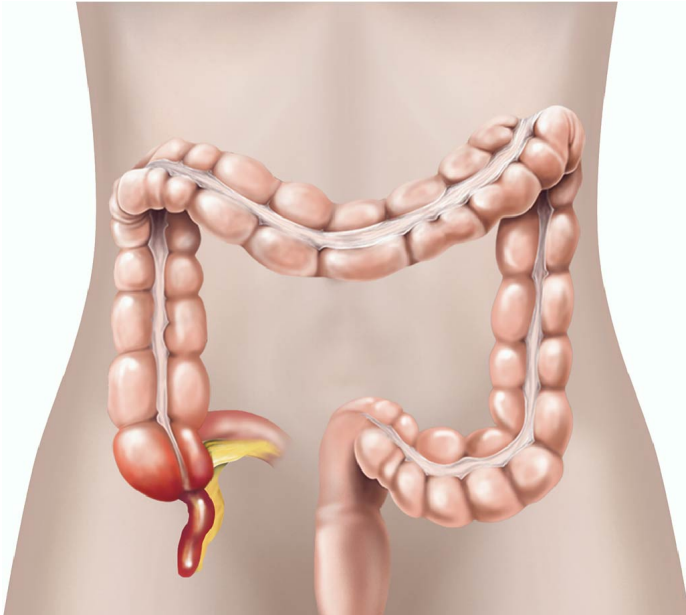
What happens after the procedure?

Your child should be able to go home 1 to 4 days after a procedure for simple appendicitis or about a week after a procedure for a burst appendix.

Your child should be able to return to school after about a week, depending on how severe the appendicitis was and when they feel comfortable again. Your child can return to normal activities as soon as they feel comfortable. This may take up to 6 weeks.

Summary

Appendicitis is a common condition where the appendix becomes inflamed. In most cases, surgery is the only dependable way to stop the



An inflamed appendix

life-threatening risk of the appendix bursting and spreading infection.

Keep this information document. Use it to help you if you need to talk to the healthcare team.

Some information, such as risk and complication statistics, is taken from global studies and/or databases. Please ask your surgeon or doctor for more information about the risks that are specific to you, and they may be able to tell you about any other suitable treatments options.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant healthcare team would give you.

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Illustrator

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