

Appendicectomy – A Young Person’s Guide



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Who to contact and how:

Notes:

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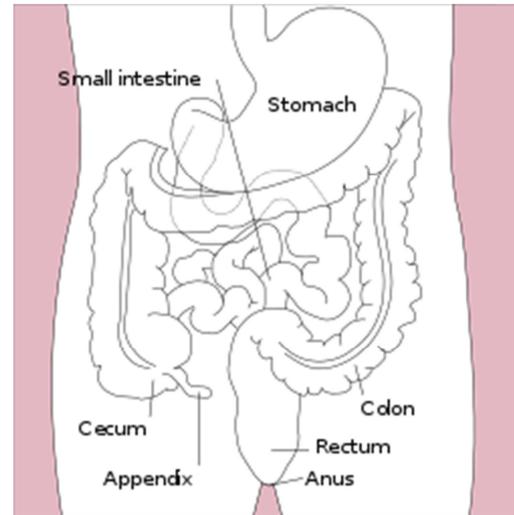
Information for patients

Introduction

This leaflet has been written to provide you with more information about appendicitis and having an appendicectomy.

Appendicitis is inflammation and infection of the appendix, it is not known what causes appendicitis, anyone can get it. You will have severe pain, feel very unwell and have problems doing normal day-to-day activity.

Your appendix is a small finger like structure of your bowel; it can be seen in the diagram opposite. No one knows what the appendix is for. Untreated, appendicitis can cause severe problems to your abdomen, such as more severe infection and damage to the structures of your bowel.



How is appendicitis diagnosed?

It is difficult to diagnose appendicitis. The doctor caring for you will ask questions about the pain, its location, how long you have been feeling unwell and examine your abdomen. The doctor may want to do blood tests and put a cannula (small plastic tube inserted into a vein in your hand or arm), and you may need an ultrasound scan. If appendicitis is suspected you may have to stay in hospital for observation.

How to Treat Appendicitis

You may be given antibiotics to treat the infection but sometimes the appendix will need to be removed. If this is the cause you will need to fasted (nothing to eat or drink). Removing the appendix does not cause any long term problems; it can be safer than the risks of leaving it.

There are two ways of removing the appendix. It can be done by keyhole surgery (laparoscopic) or open surgery both with general anaesthetic. It is difficult to say how long the operation will take as every patient and their appendix is different.

After the appendix has been removed the wound will usually be closed with dissolvable stitches or glue and covered with a small dressing that helps to keep it clean and dry. The dressing covering the wound may be removed within 48 to 72 hours after the operation. You will be left with a small scar which will fade in time.

What happens after the operation?

After the operation you will have an intravenous (IV) infusion, a drip. The drip will stay in place until you feel like eating and drinking. You may also need to have IV antibiotics; these will be given through a cannula.

Information for patients

Your nurse will record your observation regularly after the operation; for the first few hours after you return from theatre this will be every 30-60 minutes. Your nurse will ask you about your pain; give you regular pain relief medication and check that the pain is reduced.

After the operation you need to mobilise (get out of bed and walk around); the nurses understand that this is painful and scary, but the more you do this the sooner you will recover and start to feel better. Mobilisation is important to prevent the blood clots.

What happens when you go home?

You can go home once you have recovered from your operation and the anaesthetic. We advise that you remain off school for approximately 1-2 weeks and do not take part in any strenuous physical activity (i.e. sports, swimming) for at least four weeks or as otherwise instructed by the doctor.

A community nurse referral will be made for you. The community nurse will come to your home and check the wound to make sure it is healing properly. The community nurse may also remove any stitches or clips that are not dissolvable.

Reference Section

NHS (2016). Overview - Appendicitis. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/appendicitis/>. Available on 09/08/2018.

Guy's and St. Thomas's NHS Foundation Trust (2017). Having an appendicectomy. <https://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/resources/patient-information/gi/appendicectomy.pdf>. Available on 09/08/2018.

Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Foundation Trust (2015). Appendicitis and removal of the appendix. <https://www.gosh.nhs.uk/conditions-and-treatments/general-medical-conditions/appendicitis-and-removal-appendix>. Available on 08/11/2019.

Contact Details for Further Information

Rainforest Ward, Diana Princess of Wales Hospital, Grimsby

Tel 03033 304477 or 03033 304478

Children's Services Community Nursing Team – Grimsby

Tel 03033 304509 or 03033 305193

Disney Ward, Scunthorpe General Hospital

Tel 03033 302553

Children's Services Community Nursing Team – Scunthorpe

Tel 03033 306155 or 03033 306153

Information for patients

Any Comments, Compliments, Concerns or Complaints

If you have any other concerns please talk to your nurse, therapist or doctor. Our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) are available on 03033 306518 (Grimsby, Scunthorpe and Goole). You can also contact nlg-tr.PALS@nhs.net

As a Trust we value equality of access to our information and services, therefore alternative formats available on request at nlg-tr.interpreters@nhs.net

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