

Patient information

Appendicectomy



What is an appendicectomy?

Your appendix is located just under the large bowel and to the right hand side of the abdomen. Although the appendix serves no function in humans, it can become inflamed and infected. If not dealt with, this can cause infection to spread within the body. Therefore, an appendicectomy is an operation to remove the appendix to prevent you from becoming more poorly.

Before the operation

Appendectomies are often emergency procedures which can sometimes seem scary when there is little time to prepare. However, you and your family will be seen by the surgeon and the anaesthetist before the operation to ask any questions you may have. The nursing team on the ward are more than happy to explain the journey to theatre and back to the ward, to put your mind at ease.

It is important that you are appropriately starved before the operation, this means you need to not have had anything to eat or drink (apart from sips of water) six hours before the procedure is due to take place.

After the operation

Once you are awake and the recovery team has finished looking after you, you will return to the children's ward for further observation and care. The nursing team will check your pulse, blood pressure and temperature, as well as other checks regularly to make sure you are recovering well. The nursing staff will make sure you are comfortable by offering regular pain relief medicine when needed, as well as checking any wounds from the operation.

When can I go home?

Everyone recovers differently and it will be up to the surgical team, as well as the nursing staff and you as a family, to decide when it is time to go home. If the operation is in the morning and you recover quickly, you may be discharged that evening. However, it is important that you are well enough to go home and therefore you may have to stay for a couple of days, one adult can always stay overnight on the ward with you.

Discharge advice

- ❖ It can take six to eight weeks for the wounds from the operation to heal, therefore make sure you get plenty of rest at home and avoid doing any strenuous activity ie PE, swimming and after school activities in this time.
- ❖ You may have had to have stiches; these are normally dissolvable and will not have to be removed. However, if stiches do need to be removed, you will either be seen via a follow up appointment at the hospital or at your local GP surgery. This information will be given to you before you leave the hospital.
- ❖ It is important to maintain a good appetite and drinking well to aid recovery. Regular pain relief is often required following the first few days of discharge, so it is recommended to be prepared with paracetamol and ibuprofen to keep your child comfortable.
- ❖ As mentioned, all children recover differently. Therefore, the surgeon will be happy to discuss returning back to school with you and your family, to make sure you feel comfortable with this.

When to seek help

You should seek help if your child has any of the following:

- high temperatures
- loss of appetite
- reduced fluid intake
- not opening bowels
- feeling generally unwell
- pain even when regular pain relief has been

- infected / seeping wound

Common complications post operation includes abscesses, wound infection and paralytic ileus.

For general questions and advice the ward staff would be more than happy to help. However, if you are concerned your child requires further medical attention you will need to visit you GP or Emergency Department. 111 will be able to assist you over the phone if you are unable to leave your home and require an ambulance. **Always call 999 for an emergency.**

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