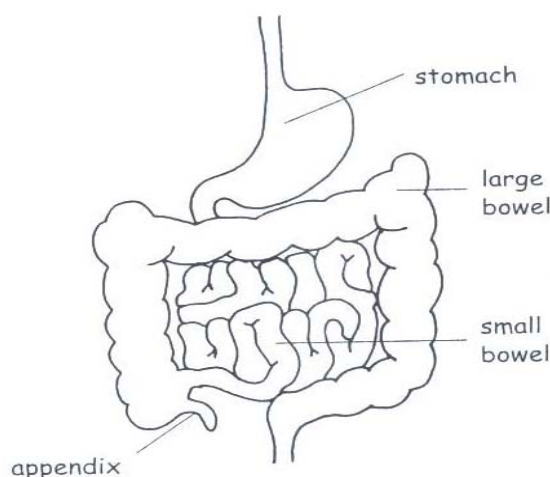


Children's Services

Appendicectomy

What and where is the appendix?

It is located on the lower right side of the abdomen (stomach). It is a small sac attached to the main bowel. At the present time its specific function is unknown.



Appendicitis occurs when this area becomes blocked and inflamed (swollen).

What tests may be done to diagnose appendicitis?

Diagnosis is not always straightforward as the symptoms for appendicitis can also be present in other conditions.

Your child may have a sample of blood taken from the arm. An ultrasound scan or x-ray may be requested to help make a final diagnosis.

What does the operation involve?

If a diagnosis of appendicitis has been made, the appendix needs to be removed. This is carried out via an operation called an 'appendicectomy', which is done under general anaesthetic. This will either be done via a laparoscopy (three small cuts: keyhole surgery) or by open procedure.

If the appendix is left, it will become increasingly inflamed, and may perforate (burst) into the abdominal cavity, causing generalised infection (peritonitis) which can become serious.

Your child will be operated on as soon as there is a space on the emergency operating list. However, if the case is not considered urgent, the operation will take place the following day.

Appendicectomy is one of the most common procedures performed however, there is a small risk of wound infection following the operation.

What happens after the operation?

When your child starts to awake in the recovery room after the operation, the recovery nurse will ring the ward and you will be asked to go there. Your child may be very sleepy when you first see them or a little disorientated and tearful. Both reactions are completely normal.

The nurse will closely monitor your child on their return to the ward. In order to rest the bowel, your child may not be able to eat or drink for several hours after the operation. Intravenous fluids may be given until your child is drinking again. Your doctor will tell you when your child is allowed to start eating and drinking. Once your child is allowed to drink, it is best to start slowly as he/she may feel sick. Anti-sickness medication will be given as needed. When your child is able to eat, it is best to encourage him/her to eat small amounts frequently.

When your child was asleep in theatre he/she may have been given analgesia (pain relief) to relieve any discomfort. Medicines will also be given back on the ward in order to keep your child comfortable. If you feel that your child is in any pain please let the nursing staff know.

Antibiotics may be given if the appendix was inflamed or infected.

It is not unusual for the wound site to ooze slightly after the operation. It will be checked by your nurse.

How should I care for my child at home?

- Your child should stay home from school for a week.
- Strenuous activities, such as sport, should be avoided for at least three weeks.
- Your child should not have a bath for five days because dissolvable sutures are used in the wound. Your child can shower if he/she has a waterproof dressing over the wound.

- Check the wound for any signs of infection as it heals. These include redness around the wound or any discharge form the wound site. Contact your GP if you have any concerns.
- Offer the prescribed painkillers and medicines as instructed by the nurse. You may find that your child is uncomfortable particularly at night and first thing in the morning.

What follow up will my child need?

The doctor at the hospital will not need to see your child unless any problem arises. If you have any concerns do not hesitate to contact your GP.

If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to ask the nursing staff.

Ward:

Telephone:



We are currently working towards a smoke-free site. Smoking is only permitted in the designated smoking areas.

For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS Stop Smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169

Help with this leaflet:



If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio format, please ask the department to contact Patient Information: 01223 216032 or patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk



Document history

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Department	Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 0QQ www.cuh.org.uk
Contact number	01223 245151
Publish/Review date	June 2011/June 2014
File name	Appendicectomy.doc
Version number/Ref	2/PIN0215