

Simple Appendectomy for a Child

Appendectomy is a surgery to remove the appendix. The appendix is a small pouch that comes off of the large intestine. The appendix sometimes gets blocked and becomes infected and swollen. Signs of an infected appendix include abdominal pain in the lower right side, fever, poor appetite, nausea, and vomiting. If the appendix bursts, it can make you very sick.

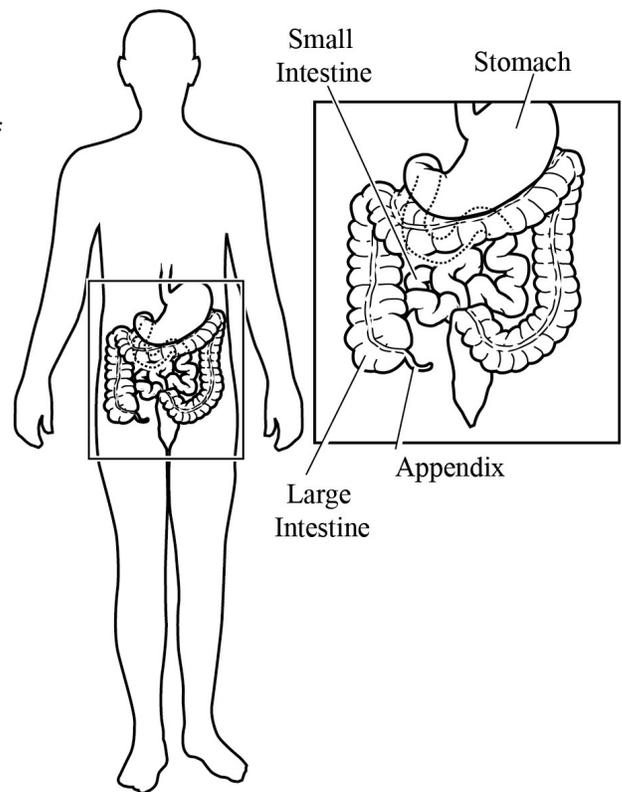
To do this surgery, the doctor will make 3 or 4 small incisions in the abdomen.

To Prepare

- Tell your doctor what medicines your child is taking including prescriptions, over the counter medicines, vitamins, and herbs.
- If your child has any allergies to medicines, foods, or other things, tell the staff.
- Your child should have nothing more to drink until after the surgery.

During Surgery

- Your child will wear a hospital gown.
- An IV (intravenous) is put into a vein for giving medicine and fluids.
- Your child will be given medicine, so he or she will sleep through the surgery. The medicine will be given through the IV or a face mask.
- The abdomen is cleaned and sheets are put over your child to keep the surgery area clean.
- Incisions are made in your child's abdomen.
- The appendix is removed.
- The incisions are then closed with:
 - Gauze and tape dressing
 - Steri-Strips™, a special tape
 - Dermabond®, a special glue
- A transparent dressing, called Opsite, or bandages may be placed over the wounds.



After Surgery

In the Hospital

- Your child is taken to the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) and watched closely until he or she wakes up and is doing well.
- Your child's breathing, blood pressure, and pulse are checked often.
- Your doctor will talk to you about your child's surgery.
- Your child will need to get up and walk around after surgery. This helps "wake up" the bowels, and helps with your child's breathing and blood circulation.
- Your child may be able to go home the same day as surgery if he or she can walk, take pain medicine by mouth, and drink clear liquids.
- Medicines given during the surgery will make your child sleepy. Your child should be watched closely for 24 hours after you go home.

At Home

- Your child should get plenty of rest.
- Give medicines as directed by your doctor.
- Call your child's doctor's office to schedule a follow up visit.
- Follow the instructions given to you on how to care for your child's incisions.
 - ❑ **Steri-Strips™**: The tapes will fall off on their own. Do not remove them unless the doctor says that it is okay.
 - ❑ **Dermabond®**: The glue will loosen from your child's skin as your child's wounds heal. Wounds covered in Dermabond® need to be kept dry for one day after surgery.
 - ❑ **Opsite**: Leave this dressing in place. It will fall off on its own in 1 to 2 weeks. Do not remove unless your child's doctor says that it is okay.
- Your child may take a shower. Do not let your child take a tub bath or swim for one week after surgery. Carefully wash the incisions with soap and water and pat dry.
- It may be hard for your child to have a bowel movement after surgery. Walking and eating high fiber cereals, beans, vegetables, and whole grain breads will help. Drinking a lot of liquids may also help.
- Your child may need to do deep breathing and coughing exercises to keep from getting a lung infection after surgery. Have your child deep breathe and cough every hour while awake and if he or she wakes up during the night.
- Your child should not lift objects over 10 pounds for 3 weeks after surgery.
- Talk to your child's doctor or nurse about other activity limits. Your child should be able to return to normal activities in about 1 week.

Call the doctor right away if your child has:

- Incisions that come apart
- New bleeding from the incisions
- Pain in the abdomen or shoulder area that does not go away or gets worse
- Increased redness, bruising, tenderness, or swelling
- A fever over 101 degrees F under the arm or 102 degrees F rectally
- Stomach becomes distended (full and firm), or your child acts as if it is painful
- Vomiting more than one time
- Trouble having a bowel movement

Call 911 right away if:

- Your child has trouble breathing all of a sudden.
- Your child has chest pain.

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.