

APPENDICECTOMY

GENERAL INFORMATION

The appendix is a small appendage that hangs from the first part of the large bowel in the right part of your lower abdomen. It is about 12cm long and a little thicker than a pencil. If this tube becomes plugged and infected, appendicitis can develop. It occurs at all ages and in both sexes.

COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- There is usually pain in the abdomen.
- Loss of appetite, nausea and sometimes vomiting is present.
- The pain eventually becomes prominent on the right side of the lower abdomen.
- A fever may be present.

DIAGNOSIS

- A careful history and physical examination is a most important way to make a correct diagnosis.
- Your doctor may order an X-ray or ultrasound of the abdomen to see whether any other abnormalities are present.
- The diagnosis can never be made with 100 percent certainty.
- If it is a close call, it is safer to operate than to risk having an infected appendix rupture.

TREATMENT

The treatment for appendicitis is an operation to remove the appendix.

OPERATION

You will be asleep for the operation.
An incision will be made in the right lower part of your abdomen.

POST-OPERATIVE CARE

- You will be taken to a recovery room. When you are stable you will be taken to your regular hospital room.
- The pain will be controlled with medicine.
- Your doctor will decide when you may take fluid and food by mouth. This may be very soon after the operation.
- You should be able to go home in 1 - 3 days depending on how seriously your appendix was infected. On discharge arrangements will be made by your doctor for a follow up and removal of the stitches if necessary.

HOME CARE

- You may walk about, even climb stairs but don't overdo things.
- You will usually be able to eat normally once you have been discharged.
- Your doctor would have discussed the management of your dressings.
- Your incision may be uncomfortable for a few days.
- Your doctor will have discussed with you when you may drive a car.
- Your doctor will discuss with you when you may return to work.

COMPLICATIONS

1. Complications do occasionally occur after an APPENDICECTOMY. It is important for you to remember that

this is a major abdominal operation.

2. An infection of the skin wound frequently occurs.

3. Occasionally an intra-abdominal abscess or even peritonitis occurs after an appendicectomy. Your doctor will decide whether this necessitates further surgery.

4. As this is an intra-abdominal operation, intra-abdominal organs may be damaged. This happens very rarely.

5. An incisional hernia can develop at the site of the appendicectomy incision, this occasionally occurs especially when there has been a wound infection.

6. Systemic complications like venous thrombosis and pulmonary embolism are rare but possible after any operation or anaesthetic.

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