



APPENDICITIS

Aster
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WHAT IS APPENDICITIS?

Appendicitis is an inflammation of the appendix. The appendix is a small, fingerlike pouch located where the large and small intestines join. It has no known use. Inflammation is the body's reaction to irritation, injury, or infection. It causes swelling and pain.

It is important to get treatment for appendicitis before the appendix ruptures. A rupture is a break or tear in the appendix. If an infected appendix ruptures, infection may move into the abdomen. This can cause peritonitis, which is a dangerous infection of the lining of the belly. Peritonitis can be fatal if it is not treated right away. Because of the risk of rupture, appendicitis is considered an emergency.

HOW DOES IT OCCUR?

In most cases, inflammation of the appendix is caused by a blockage of the opening of the appendix by a piece of stool. It may also be a reaction to infection in the digestive tract.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

The symptoms are different from person to person but may include:

- Abdominal pain, usually starting near the bellybutton, then moving to the right lower side of the belly
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Constipation or diarrhea
- Trouble passing gas
- Fever, usually not very high.
- The symptoms of peritonitis are much more severe. The pain is worse and is felt throughout the abdomen. The abdomen may be swollen and feel tight or hard.

HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED?

Sometimes it is difficult to diagnose appendicitis, especially in young children, older adults, and pregnant women. Your Physician will review your symptoms and examine you.

You may have the following tests:

- Blood tests
- Urine tests
- X-ray or ultrasound or CT exam of your belly.

HOW IS IT TREATED?

If the diagnosis is not clear, you may be watched closely in the emergency room or admitted in wards for 12 to 24 hours to see if surgery is necessary. In most cases the appendix must be removed. The operation is called an appendectomy.

Peritonitis is also treated with surgery and is a medical emergency. A person with symptoms of peritonitis needs to be seen in the emergency department as soon as possible.

Before surgery, you will be given antibiotics. These may be continued 24 hours or many days, depending on whether your appendix ruptured and caused peritonitis.

For the first day or so after surgery, you may not be given anything to eat or drink. Then you will be allowed to have small amounts of water, later clear liquids, and finally some solid food until you are able to handle a regular diet.

The usual stay in the hospital after an appendectomy is less than 4 days if your appendix did not rupture. If your appendix ruptured, you may stay in the hospital 7 days or longer. You can live a normal life without an appendix.

HOW CAN I TAKE CARE OF MYSELF?

- Rest. Get plenty of sleep
- Eat foods high in protein while you are healing if your physician says it is OK.
- Eat small frequent meals.
- Gradually increase your walking and activity as directed by your physician.
- Keep your sutures clean.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS PROCEDURE?

Some possible complications of an appendectomy include:

- Bleeding
- Wound infection
- Infection and redness and swelling (inflammation) of the belly that can occur if the appendix bursts during surgery (peritonitis)
- Blocked bowels
- Injury to nearby organ. You may have other risks that are unique to you. Be sure to discuss any concerns with your healthcare provider before surgery.

WHEN SHOULD I CALL THE DOCTOR?

CALL THE DOCTOR IMMEDIATELY IF:

- You develop a fever.
- You notice excessive drainage from the wound.
- You are in uncontrollable pain.
- You have questions about the procedure or its result.
- You want to make another appointment.



PLEASE SCAN FOR
THE LOCATION

Aster HOSPITAL

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