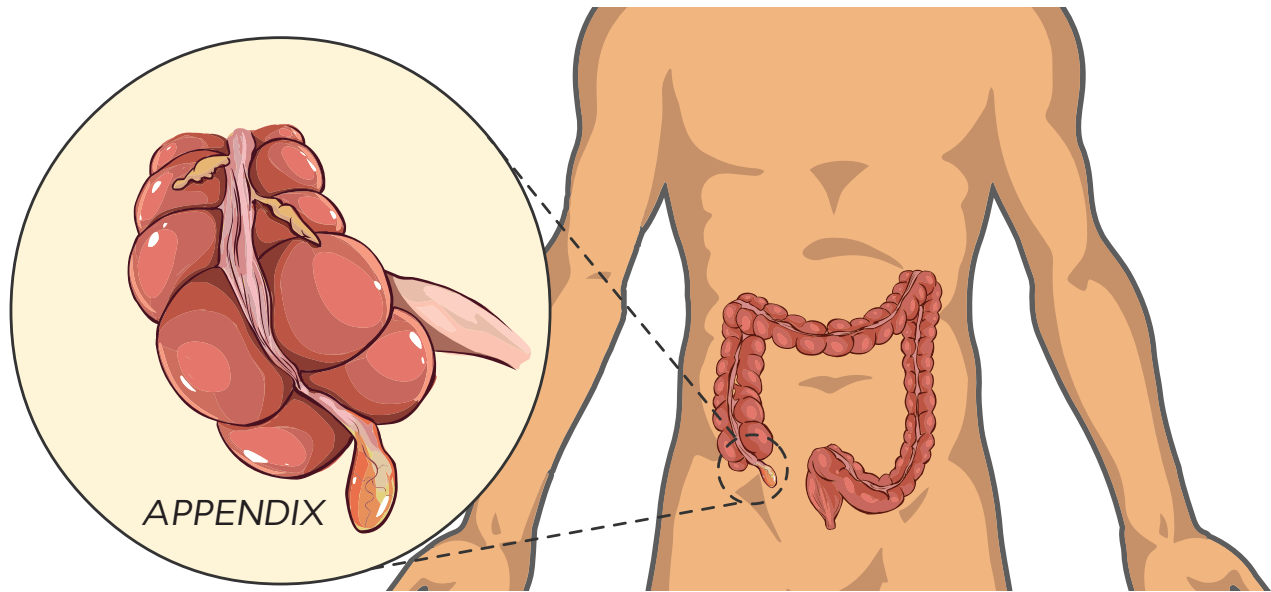


APPENDICITIS



You probably know someone who has had appendicitis, and subsequently had their appendix removed. One in 15 people in the United States will get appendicitis, usually people between the ages of 10 and 30.

Here's the good news: You can live without your appendix with very few problems.

But why is the inflammation of the 3 1/2-inch-long tube of tissue that extends from the large intestine so dangerous? If the condition is not treated, the appendix can burst and fill the abdomen with infectious liquid, which can cause potentially-fatal inflammation of the abdominal lining. Therefore, emergency removal of the appendix is required.

WHAT CAUSES APPENDICITIS?

When the appendix becomes blocked, it can swell and allow appendicitis to set in. Blockages may result from stool, cancer, foreign bodies, infection or other issues.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF APPENDICITIS?

Symptoms of appendicitis include:

- Often, the first sign is a subdued pain near your belly button, which becomes more intense as it moves toward the lower right abdomen.
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Fever of 99-102 degrees
- Loss of appetite
- Abdominal swelling and/or inability to pass gas
- Stomach cramps
- Constipation or diarrhea with gas

Sometimes, symptoms may also include pain elsewhere in the abdomen, back, or rectum and/or painful urination.

Remember, treatment of appendicitis is extremely important. If you believe you're suffering from appendicitis or are scheduled for surgery, it is best to not eat, drink, or use any pain remedies, as this can make the appendix burst. It's also best to avoid the use of antacids, laxatives, or heating pads, which can cause more damage to your appendix.



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APPENDICITIS

HOW IS APPENDICITIS DIAGNOSED?

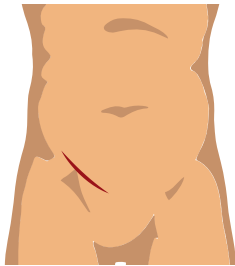
There are several tests that can help a medical professional diagnose appendicitis:

- Abdominal exam
- CT scans and/or ultrasound
- Blood test to see if your body is fighting infection
- Rectal exam
- Urine test to rule out a urinary tract infection

Such exams can help rule out other conditions, such as gallbladder problems, a bladder or urinary tract infection, Crohn's disease, gastritis, intestinal infection, and ovary problems. These exhibit similar symptom to appendicitis.

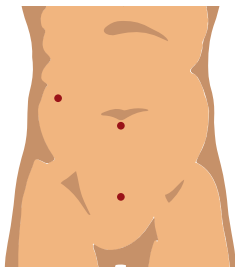
APPENDECTOMY SURGERY

There are two options when it comes to removing the appendix:



SURGICAL INCISION

1) **Open Method** – A surgeon accesses and removes the appendix through a two- to three-inch incision in the lower right-hand side of the abdomen.



LAPAROSCOPIC INCISIONS

2) **Laparoscopic Method** – Using a video camera and small incisions, a surgeon accesses and removes the appendix.

A laparoscopic procedure may cause less pain and scarring, and it often carries less recovery time both in the hospital and at home as well as lower infection rates.

Complications associated with appendectomies may include:

- Wound infection
- Peritonitis – inflammation of the abdomen's lining
- Bowel obstruction
- Injury to the tube that carries urine to your bladder
- Injury to bowel
- Injury to bladder
- Need for an additional procedure



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