

After Laparoscopic or Open Appendectomy

Read this resource to learn about:

- How to take care of yourself at home
- What activities are safe to do
- How to cope with pain
- Problems to watch for
- When to see the surgeon for follow up



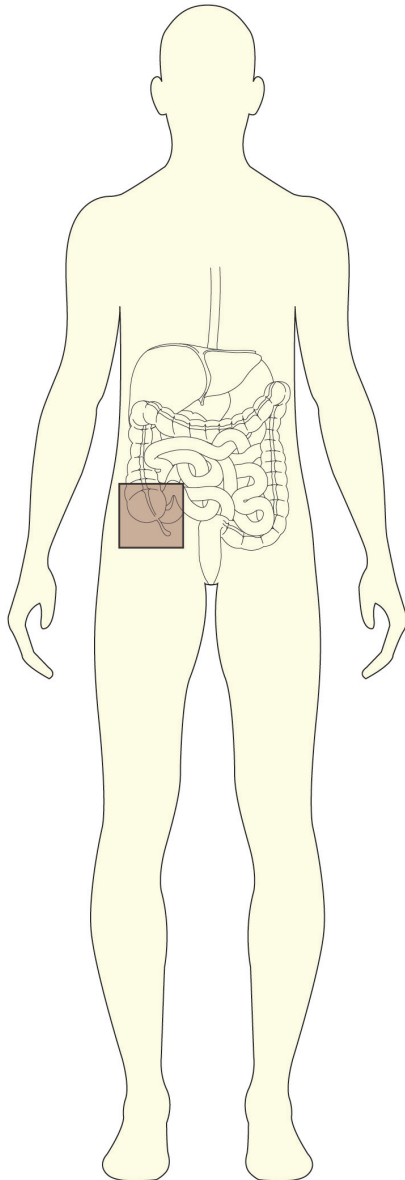
Do not drive a car or drink alcohol for 24 hours.

Have a responsible adult stay with you overnight.

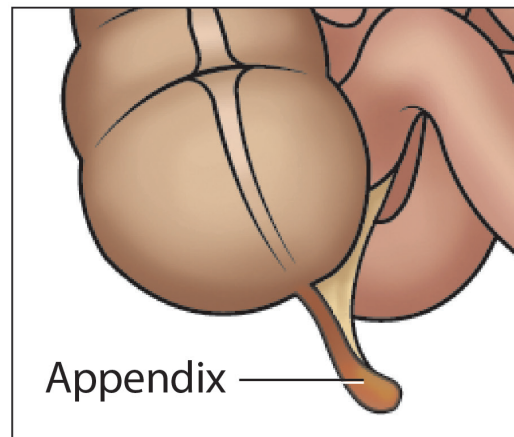


What is a laparoscopic or open appendectomy?

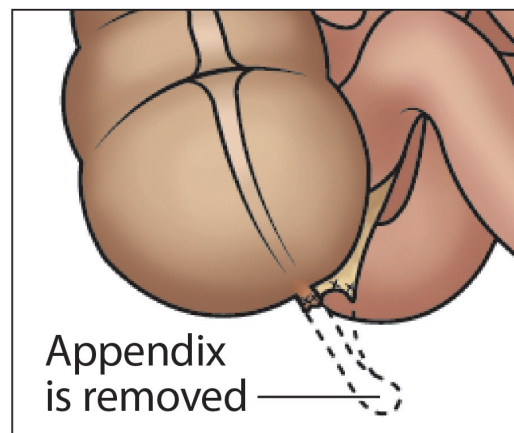
Your surgeon has removed your appendix. You will have 4 small incisions (cuts) or 1 large incision after your surgery.



Before Surgery



After Surgery



What can I eat and drink after my surgery

For the first day have clear fluids, like apple juice, ginger ale, clear tea and broth. The next day you can slowly go back to eating your usual meals.

If you are vomiting or feel nauseous (sick to your stomach), you can take anti-nausea medication such as Gravol. You can buy it from your pharmacy without a prescription. Always follow the instructions on the package and keep drinking fluids (such as water) until the nausea stops. Then you can slowly return to eating your usual meals.

How much activity is safe?

Go home and rest today.

You will be walking within hours of your surgery, so keep taking short walks at home for the first day. For example, you can try walking to the bathroom, kitchen or bedroom.

For the next 4 to 6 weeks:

- **Do not** lift anything over than 10 pounds (5 kilograms) such as groceries, small children or pets.
- **Do not** try strenuous or tiring activities such as sports, gardening, jogging, golfing, skiing, swimming or shoveling snow.

When can I return to work and sports?

Your surgeon will tell you when it is safe to go back to work and sports.

How do I take care of my bandage (dressing)?

- You will have 3 or 4 small incisions (cuts) in your belly after surgery. A gauze bandage and small tapes called steri-strips will cover all of them.
- Remove the bandage from all your wounds 2 days after your surgery.
- **Do not replace the bandages with new ones.**
- **Do not remove the steri-strips.** The strips should remain in place for 7 to 10 days. Then you can remove them. If they begin to peel off before the 7 days, this is OK. Remove the ones that are coming loose and throw them away.

How do I take care of my wound?

- Always keep your wounds clean and dry.
- It is normal for the wounds to ooze a small amount of fluid (blood mixed with a clear fluid). There should be less and less fluid over time. If the oozing continues, cover the wounds with a small Band-Aid.
- After the 7 days you do not have to cover the wounds, but always keep the area clean.

When can I shower or take a bath?

- You can shower 2 days after your surgery.
- Take your shower after you have removed your bandage. Remember to leave your steri-strips in place.
- After you have showered, pat the wounds dry with a clean towel. Do not rub the wounds.
- Keep the wounds clean and dry at all times.
- Do not take a bath or swim for 4 weeks.

How do I cope with my pain?

It is normal to have pain after your surgery. You should have less and less pain every day.

You may have pain in your shoulders after your surgery. Shoulder pain happens because of the gas we used in your abdomen (belly) during surgery. Walking around should help to get rid of the pain.

We will give you a prescription for pain medication. Take it to a pharmacy to have it filled and follow the directions on the bottle. It is important that you take your pain medication before the pain gets bad.

As you start to feel better, take less and less pain medication until you do not need any at all. Or, change your medication to Tylenol Extra Strength and take it when you need to. Follow the instructions on the bottle.

Do not drink alcohol or drive while taking your pain medications. They may cause drowsiness.



When can I take my usual medications again?

If you have not taken your usual daily medication, take it as soon as you get home.

Do not take Aspirin (ASA) or products with ASA unless your surgeon has told you it is OK. If you take Aspirin every day, ask your surgeon when to start taking it again.

What if I am constipated?

Pain medication can make you constipated.

Your surgeon may give you a prescription for a stool softener. Fill the prescription at your local pharmacy and take it as directed to avoid constipation.

If your surgeon did not give you a prescription to prevent constipation:

- Drink about 3 to 5 glasses of water a day (each glass should be 8 ounces).
- Eat food that is high in fibre such as fruit, vegetables and bran.
- If you have not had a bowel movement after 3 days, take a laxative like Milk of Magnesia as directed on the bottle. You can buy it from the pharmacy without a prescription.



Problems to watch for

Call your surgeon, family doctor or come to the Toronto Western Hospital Emergency department if any of the problems below happen to you.

If you are from out of town, go to the nearest emergency department.

- Severe pain that does not go away after you take the pain medication
- A fever (temperature higher than 38 °C or 100 °F)
- Redness, pain and thick yellowish-green pus coming from the wounds
- Bleeding that does not stop after you apply pressure for 15 minutes
- Vomiting that does not get better after taking anti-nausea medication such as Gravol
- You cannot urinate (pee) after 10 to 12 hours and you have a bloated feeling in your lower stomach
- Your belly becomes hard and you have a lot of pain



Follow-up appointment

Please call your surgeon's office to make a follow-up appointment. Bring your health card (OHIP) with you to all your hospital visits.

- Dr Chadi 416 603 6769
- Dr Jackson 416 603 5599
- Dr Okrainec 416 603 5224
- Dr Penner 416 603 6220
- Dr Quereshy 416 603 5553

Date: _____

Time: _____

This brochure does not include a full list of brands or products. UHN does not recommend one brand over another and is not responsible for any products listed. Please contact each company directly to find out more about their products.



Have feedback about this document?

Please fill out our survey. Use this link: surveymonkey.com/r/uhn-pe

Visit www.uhnpatienteducation.ca for more health information. Contact pfep@uhn.ca to request this brochure in a different format, such as large print or electronic formats.

© 2023 University Health Network. All rights reserved. Use this material for your information only. It does not replace advice from your doctor or other health care professional. Do not use this information for diagnosis or treatment. Ask your health care provider for advice about a specific medical condition. You may print 1 copy of this brochure for non-commercial and personal use only.