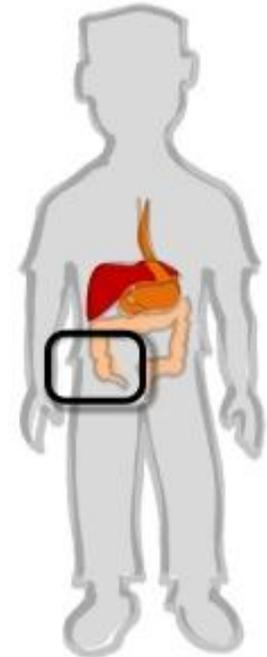
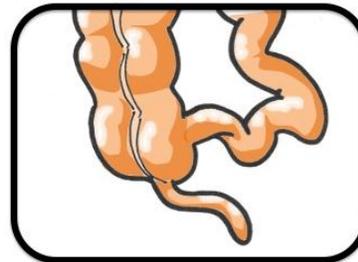




Appendicitis

Your child has abdominal pain, it might be appendicitis.

- ❖ Appendicitis is swelling or infection in the appendix. The appendix is a small organ attached to the large intestine. Appendicitis usually develops over 12-24 hours. It has symptoms such as abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, fever, and loss of appetite. Most importantly, pain that continues, worsens and moves to the right lower side of the abdomen is common in appendicitis.
- ❖ Appendicitis is the most common childhood “emergency” that must be treated in a timely manner. However, it’s important to know that many conditions have symptoms similar to appendicitis but don’t require surgery.
- ❖ At Hasbro Children’s Hospital (HCH), we evaluate your child’s abdominal pain to determine if appendicitis is the cause. That way, we avoid unnecessary operations.



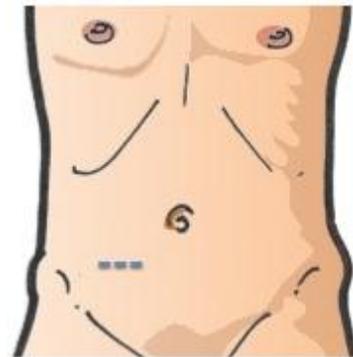
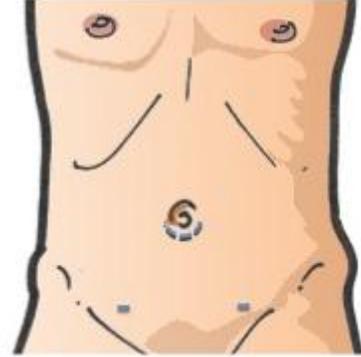
What happens now?

- ❖ **Your child will be well cared for.** First your child will be seen in the HCH emergency department (ED) by a nurse and doctor trained in pediatric emergency medicine. If necessary, your child will have tests that include blood work and a urinalysis.
- ❖ Your child’s pain will be managed with intravenous (IV) pain medication. Your child will not be allowed to eat or drink and may receive fluids through an intravenous line.
- ❖ Members of the pediatric surgical team will examine your child to help determine whether your child has appendicitis or another condition.
- ❖ We will perform a painless ultrasound on your child and the ultrasound images will be read by pediatric radiology doctors with advanced training in imaging children. Usually, ultrasound is the only imaging required but sometimes an MRI may be needed as well.
- ❖ Once appendicitis is suspected, your child will be admitted to pediatric surgery. If your child has signs of severe infection or a bowel obstruction, emergency surgery will be performed. In some cases, IV antibiotics are given first and the operation is performed after that.

Appendicitis

Routine appendicitis vs. Perforated (ruptured) appendicitis and recovery.

- ❖ Research conducted here at Hasbro Children's Hospital (and at other hospitals) has shown that children do not rupture their appendix during the assessment of the condition or while they wait for their operation. Rather, *most children with perforated appendicitis come to the hospital after having symptoms for a longer period of time.* This is especially true in young children younger than 5 years old.
- ❖ Appendectomies are performed laparoscopically using a camera with 1-3 small incisions or through a single small incision in the right lower side of the abdomen.
- ❖ Children who undergo appendectomies for routine appendicitis are usually in the hospital for 24-48 hours. Generally, a liquid diet is started the morning after the appendectomy and is eventually advanced to a regular diet. Pain medicine is switched from IV to oral form and your child will be helped out of bed to walk around the floor. If your child is able to eat solid food, has little or no pain with oral pain medication and has no fever, then your child will be discharged to go home. There is no need for additional antibiotics.
- ❖ Children with perforated appendicitis are usually in the hospital for 5-7 days for IV antibiotics to help prevent additional infection or an abscess. If the ruptured appendix caused widespread spillage of infection during the operation, a nasogastric tube may be left in the nose. This tube is used to suction air and fluid from the stomach to prevent vomiting until the intestines have recovered from the infection and operation.
- ❖ Once the nasogastric tube is removed and the intestines show signs of recovery, a liquid diet can be tried. Eventually, the diet can be advanced to regular food.
- ❖ Once your child is eating regular food and has little or no pain with pain medications, and has no signs of infection or fever, your child can be discharged to home without antibiotics.



Home, Finally!

- ❖ At home your child can resume a regular diet and routine activities.
- ❖ Your child should avoid sports and strenuous activities until seen by your surgeon at the postoperative visit.
- ❖ The surgical sites may be sore for a while; continue to take the pain medicine as prescribed.
- ❖ Your child may shower two days after the appendectomy unless you have been told otherwise.
- ❖ Your child should avoid a bath or swimming pool for the first 7 days after the operation; it is generally not good to soak fresh incisions.
- ❖ He or she may return to school as soon as possible!
- ❖ Please call the surgeon's office with questions and to confirm the postoperative visit: 401-421-1939.