

A Guide for Patients and Families

Acute Appendicitis

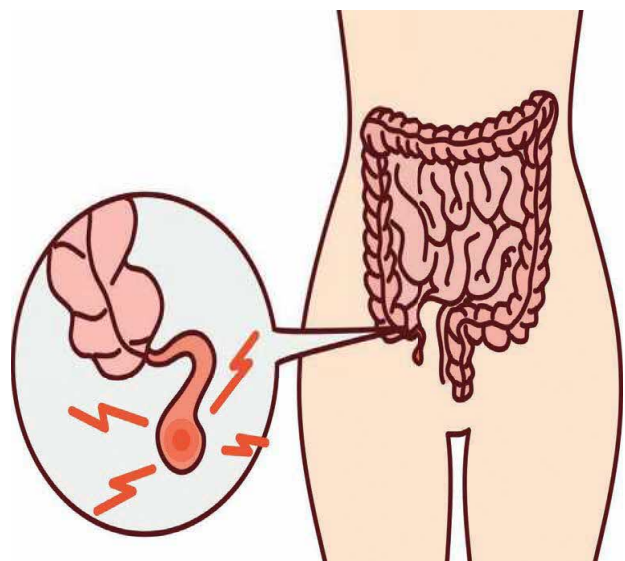
What is Acute Appendicitis?

Acute Appendicitis is the inflammation of the appendix, and it is one of the most common surgical emergencies. The exact cause of appendicitis is unclear.

Often appendicitis occurs when the appendix channel is blocked by:

- A small piece of stool (faecolith).
- Bacteria invade quickly into the appendix causing it to become infected, filled with pus, and possibly rupture.
- Rarely, a blockage can be caused by worms, swollen lymph nodes, or tumors.

If untreated, it might lead to a life-threatening condition known as peritonitis – the infection of the whole abdominal cavity when the appendix bursts and the infected contents are spread throughout. This would then require a more extensive operation with a high risk of serious complications.



Signs of Acute Appendicitis?

- Early on, an aching pain around your navel (around the belly button) that often shifts to your lower right abdomen (towards the right hip). The pain usually proceeds to become more severe with any sudden movements or gentle pressure.
- Nausea and sometimes vomiting.
- Loss of appetite.
- Fevers and chills.
- Occasional watery or loose stools.

Acute Appendicitis is treated by surgically removing the inflamed appendix and cleaning up any infected fluid inside the abdomen. This procedure is known as appendicectomy.

Appendicitis is an emergency and the operation is usually done within 24 hours of diagnosis, depending on the severity of the symptoms.

Types of Surgery

Laparoscopic

Surgery is done using several tiny incisions rather than one large one. Miniature instruments and a fiberoptic tube fitted with a camera are inserted into your abdomen through these incisions.

Open method

Open removal through an incision made through the skin and muscles of the lower right abdomen.

	Laparoscopic	Open Method
Incisions	3 small incisions (0.5-1.5cm)	Approximately 5cm incision
Hospital stay	1-2 days	1-2 days

Your surgeon will recommend the appropriate and suitable surgery for your condition.

Care and Management

Do's



Take painkillers only when needed.



Complete antibiotics when prescribed.



Keep wound clean and dry.



Take diet and fluid as advised by your doctor.



Showering is permitted.



Follow-up with appointment for review by doctor and removal of stitches if any.

Don'ts



Lift heavy objects.



Overexert yourself.



Do strenuous activity before follow-up appointment.

Complications (if any):

- Difficulty in passing urine during immediate postoperative period.
- Bleeding from wound.
- Wound infection.
- Pain
- Collection of infected fluid in the abdomen cavity that may need further treatment.

If untreated, it might lead to a life-threatening condition known as peritonitis – the infection of the whole abdominal cavity when the appendix bursts and the infected contents are spread throughout. This would then require a more extensive operation with a high risk of serious complications.

Others:

Please return to the Emergency Department if any of the above occurs.