



**NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S**  
*When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.*

**Helping Hand™**

*Health Education for Patients and Families*

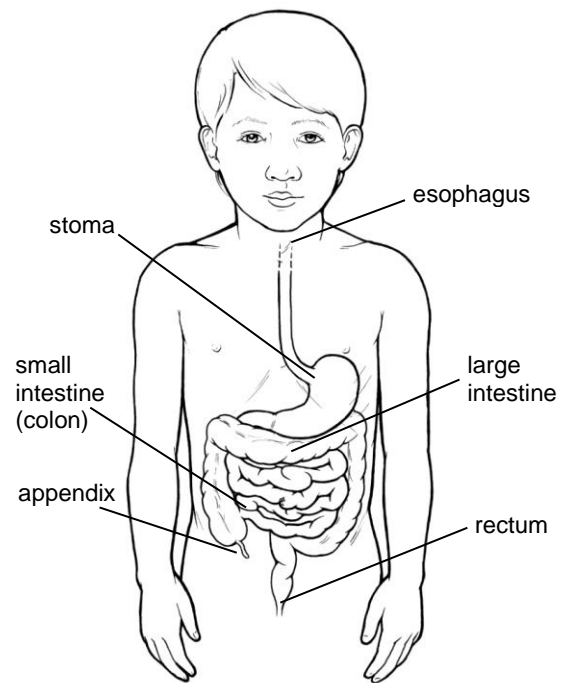
## Appendectomy: Simple Appendicitis

Your child has had an appendectomy (a-pen-DECK-tuh-mee). This is the surgical removal of the appendix. The appendix is a small, narrow sac at the beginning of the large intestine (Picture 1). The appendix does not do anything for the body.

During your child's surgery, 1 to 3 small incisions (cuts) were made. One was near the belly button. The others were on other parts of the belly. Through one incision, the surgeon put in a thin tube with a camera attached (laparoscopic).

### What to expect after surgery

- Your child will wake up in the post anesthesia care unit (PACU) near the surgery area. They may be in the PACU for 1 to 2 hours.
- Once awake, your child will return to a hospital room or be moved to the surgery unit. Discharge from the hospital will be directly from the surgery unit.
- Your child will get fluids and pain medicine through an intravenous line (IV). When your child can take liquids by mouth, pain medicine will also be given by mouth.
- Your child will need to cough and breathe deeply often to help keep the lungs clear. They may use a plastic device called an incentive spirometer to help with this.
- Your child will need to get up and walk soon after surgery. Walking will help wake up the bowels and will help with breathing and blood flow.
- Your child will be able to go home on the same day of the surgery if:
  - they can drink clear liquids, like water, broth, and apple juice
  - their pain is controlled on medicine taken by mouth



**Picture 1** The appendix inside the body.

## **Diet**

- Your child will be allowed to have clear liquids such as water, popsicles, apple juice, gelatin, or broth after discharge from the PACU.
- Your child should not eat solid food right after surgery. However, if they are hungry, we suggest starting with something bland, like crackers, until you know if solid food will cause nausea or vomiting (throwing up).

## **Care of the incision**

- Your child will have 1 to 3 small incisions. The incision near the belly button may have gauze and tape dressing. Take the gauze off 3 days after surgery.
- If there are small strips of white tape (Steri-Strip™), by themselves or with a clear dressing (Opsite®) over the incisions, leave them in place. They will fall off on their own in 1 to 2 weeks. Do not remove them unless directed by your child's health care provider.
- If your child has glue (Dermabond®) over the incisions, it will loosen and fall off on its own in 1 to 2 weeks. Do not remove it or put any ointments or creams on it.
- Your child may take a shower or a sponge bath. Do not scrub the incisions. Clean gently around the incisions with soap and water. Gently pat the incision sites dry well after the shower or sponge bath. Do not allow tub baths or swimming until 1 week after surgery.

## **Activity**

- Your child may begin normal activities 2 to 3 days after surgery. However, lifting weights more than 10 pounds and competitive sports is not allowed until 2 weeks after surgery.
- Your child may return to school 1 to 2 days after surgery and when they are comfortable.

## **When to call your health care provider**

- an incision becomes red
- an incision becomes more tender or swollen
- your child vomits more than once
- your child cannot have a bowel movement
- an incision begins to pull apart
- there is more or new drainage around incision(s)
- your child's stomach becomes distended (full and firm) or they act as if it is painful
- your child's pain is not controlled by the medicine they were told to take
- your child has fever over 100.8° Fahrenheit (F) or 38.2° Celsius (C)

## **Follow-up**

A clinic nurse will call you to follow-up a few weeks after discharge.