Appendectomy, Child
Care Before and After Surgery

Appendicitis is inflammation of the appendix and is a common cause of belly *(abdominal*) pain. Your caregiver determines the seriousness of the pain by an examination, possibly including blood tests and x-rays. Once a *diagnosis* (learning what is wrong) of appendicitis is made, the treatment is surgical and requires removal of the appendix.

WHAT CAUSES APPENDICITIS?

Appendicitis is often caused by a blockage of the appendix. The most common cause is by waste material (*feces*) from the large bowel *(colon*) blocking the appendix. Many other problems can cause a blockage in the appendix but are less common.

TREATMENT

Once the diagnosis of appendicitis is made, the procedure is to remove the appendix. This is done surgically by making a cut *(incision*) in the right lower belly *(abdomen*). This is most often done under a general anesthetic so that your child is sleeping during the procedure. Following the procedure, your child will be taken to a recovery room. Once your child has recovered from the anesthetic they will be returned to their room. Your child's caregiver will tell you how long your child will be in the hospital. Following the procedure your child will be given pain medications to keep them comfortable.

BEFORE SURGERY LET YOUR CAREGIVERS KNOW ABOUT THE FOLLOWING:

- Allergies
- Medications taken including herbs, eye drops, over the counter medications, and creams
- Use of steroids (by mouth or creams)
- Previous problems with anesthetics or novocaine
- Possibility of pregnancy, if this applies
- History of blood clots (thrombophlebitis)
- History of bleeding or blood problems
- Previous surgery
- Other health problems

AFTER YOUR CHILD'S SURGERY

After surgery, your child will be taken to the recovery area where a nurse will watch them and check their progress. Once they are awake, stable, and taking fluids well, without other problems they will be allowed to go home.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS AFTER YOUR CHILD'S SURGERY (APPENDECTOMY)

- Once your child is home an ice pack applied to the operative site may help with discomfort and keep swelling down.
- Change dressings as directed.
- Only give your child over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by their caregiver.
- Your child may continue normal diet as directed.
- There should be no heavy lifting, strenuous activities, or contact sports for three weeks, or as directed.
- Keep the wound dry and clean. The wound may be washed gently with soap and water. Gently blot or dab dry following cleansing without rubbing. Do not allow your child to take baths, use swimming pools or use hot tubs for ten days, or as instructed by your caregiver.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- There is redness, swelling, or increasing pain in the wound area.
- Pus is coming from the wound.
- An unexplained oral temperature above 101º F (38.3º C) develops.
- You notice a foul smell coming from the wound or dressing.

- A breaking open of the *wound* (edges not staying together) after sutures have been removed.
- Your child develops increasing abdominal pain.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your child develops a rash.
- Your child has difficulty breathing, or develops any reaction or side effects to medications given.

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