



Appendicectomy Information for Parents

Your child has had their appendix removed. The appendix has no special function in the body and your child should make a full recovery. How quickly your child recovers depends on what the surgeon found during the operation and how your child feels. The doctor will talk to you about the operation. Occasionally the appendix can perforate (burst) In this case your child may need to stay in hospital a few days longer.

How will my child's pain be treated?

- Children feel different levels of pain after the operation. To keep your child as pain free as possible your child will be given painkillers during the operation and at regular times afterwards.
- You know your child best; please tell the nurse if you think your child is in pain.
- Changing your child's position and using pillows can also help make them feel more comfortable.
- Some older children are prescribed a PCA (patient controlled analgesia). This is an infusion with morphine that gives a dose of painkiller when your child presses a button. The nurse will explain how this works.
- The nurse will regularly assess your child by observing them, and asking how they feel. The nurse may ask your child to choose from a number of happy or sad pictures. This will help the nurse to monitor how your child is feeling and how much pain they have.
- There are play specialists on the ward and who will discuss with you how to occupy and distract your child.
- If it is difficult to keep your child comfortable the nurse can seek the advice of nurses who are specially trained in managing pain.

What can I do to help?

Encourage close family members to visit, but not too many as this can be tiring for your child. Tell the nurse if you think your child is in pain. Bring special toys or games from home.

When will my child get out of bed and start walking?

Most children are reluctant to get out of bed for the first time, and they will need help and encouragement. This is usually the day after the operation. Your child will soon be able to go for short walks.

What can I do to help?

Before your child gets up encourage them to move about as much as possible in bed. They should move their legs and sit up, so that they are not too stiff when they do get out of bed. When your child starts to walk, encourage them to walk with a straight back and to look straight ahead.

Will my child be able to eat and drink?

Most children will have a drip in their arm when they return from theatre, giving fluid via a thin plastic tube into your child's vein. This prevents them from becoming dehydrated (not enough fluid in the body).

Your child can usually have small sips of water to drink soon after the operation. It is important that the amount of fluid is increased gradually so they are not sick. They can usually eat a light diet after 1 or 2 days.

What can I do to help?

- Check with your nurse before you give your child food or drink. Fatty and fried foods are not advised.
- Offer your child frequent small drinks. Talk to your nurse about filling in the fluid record chart.

When can I take my child home?

Usually your child can go home after 1-3 days. They need to be able to take short walks, tolerate a light diet and be comfortable.

How do I look after my child at home?

- There are usually no stitches to be removed. The dry dressing over the wound can be removed in a few days.
- Your child may be more comfortable wearing loose clothing that does not rub over the wound.
- A daily shower or shallow bath without bubble bath can be taken. Pat the wound dry with a soft towel.
- Your child may eat their usual diet.
- You will be given painkillers for your child to take at home. Give these regularly for the first few days then as required. Follow the instructions on the bottle.

Paracetamol was given at.....and can be given again if needed after 4-6 hours.

Ibuprofen was given at.....and can be given again if needed after 6-8 hours.

- Distraction with toys and games whilst they are recovering from the operation may reduce the need for painkillers.

When can my child return to their usual activities?

Your child:

- can gradually increase their activities, as they feel able,
- should avoid riding a bike, swimming and games for 6 weeks,
- should not attend school for 2 weeks. Let the school know that your child has had an operation.

If you need further advice contact:

Starlight Children's Ward: 0161 291 224

Wythenshawe Hospital

Southmoor Road

Wythenshawe

M23 9LT