

# Laparoscopic Appendectomy

## What is laparoscopic appendectomy

An **appendectomy** (ap-pen-DECK-tum-ee) is a surgery to remove your appendix. A **laparoscopic** (lap-are-ah-SKAH-pik) appendectomy is done with a surgical tool called a **laparoscope** (LAP-ar-oh-scope). This is a long thin tube that contains a tiny camera and a light. It allows the surgeon to perform the surgery with just a few small incisions (cuts) instead of one longer one. You'll have smaller scars and, in most cases, fewer complications and a faster recovery.

## Why do I need an appendectomy?

Appendectomy is the treatment for **appendicitis** (ah-pen-dih-SITE-iss). This is a condition in which your appendix becomes infected and inflamed. An appendectomy is almost always an emergency surgery. If an infected appendix is not removed right away, it may burst and cause further problems, even death.

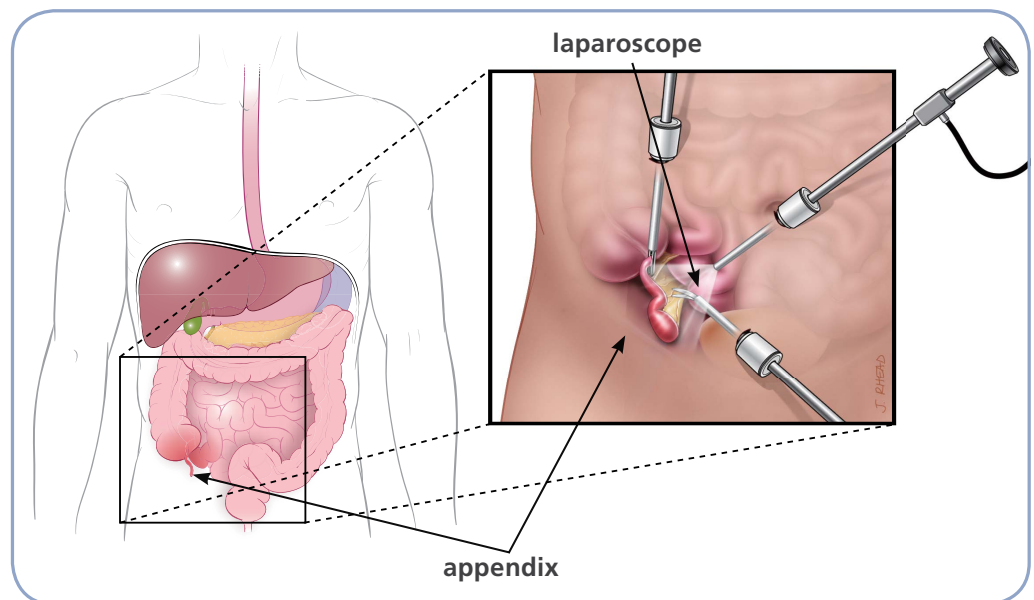
## What happens before the procedure?

- You may be given medicine to make you sleepy.
- You'll be given **general anesthesia**. This makes you sleep and keeps you from feeling anything during the surgery. It will be given through an intravenous (IV) line attached to your hand or forearm.
- A **breathing tube will be placed in your throat** to keep your airway open during surgery.

## What happens during the procedure?

The surgery will last about an hour.

- **Your doctor will make 3 or 4 very small (¼-inch to ½-inch) incisions** through the skin of your abdomen.
- **A harmless gas is pumped into your abdomen.** This creates more space for your doctor to see the appendix and other organs.
- **The doctor will insert a narrow tube**, called a **cannula**, through one of the incisions.
- **The laparoscope will be inserted through the cannula.** The camera sends an image of the inside of your abdomen, including your appendix, to a computer screen for the doctor to view.
- **Additional cannulas will be inserted through the other incisions.** The doctor will insert small tools through these and take out the appendix.





## When should I call my doctor?

Call your doctor if you have:

- Severe belly pain or pain you can't control
- Severe bloating or a swollen stomach
- You have chills or a fever above 101°F
- Nausea or vomiting that doesn't stop
- Bleeding from the rectum
- Increasing redness or pus draining from any of your incisions

OR

- You can't urinate (pee) 8 to 10 hours after surgery
- You haven't had a bowel movement (poop) within 3 days of surgery
- You feel faint or light-headed, even when lying down.



## Questions for my doctor:

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## What happens after the procedure?

- **Closing your incisions.** After the appendix is removed, the incisions will be closed with small sutures (stitches), small strips of tape, or both. A dressing (bandage) may be placed over the incisions.
- **Monitoring your recovery.** After the procedure, you will be taken to a recovery room where your vital signs (temperature, pulse, breathing rate, and blood pressure) will be monitored for about an hour or more.
- **Going home.** Most people go home the same day. Before you leave, you will give you instructions to help you care for yourself at home. A friend or family member should take notes to help you remember your instructions. You will need a responsible adult to drive you home and stay with you for the first 24 hours (1 day).

## Managing pain after your procedure

- After surgery, you may have pain or irritation around your incisions. This may take a few weeks to go away. Over the first few days, you may also have:
  - Shoulder or neck pain. This is from nerve irritation caused by the gas injected into your abdomen during the procedure. The pain may get better if you change positions.
  - Cramping or swelling in your abdomen.
  - A sore throat.
  - Nausea (feeling sick to your stomach).
- **You and your healthcare providers will set a pain goal.** Take your pain medicine exactly as instructed. This will help you control your pain and stay within your goal.
- **Don't take any pain medicine that your doctor has not recommended.** Don't drink alcohol or use street drugs while taking pain medicine.
- **Pain medicine may cause constipation.** If necessary, you may take over-the-counter stool softeners or laxatives.

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