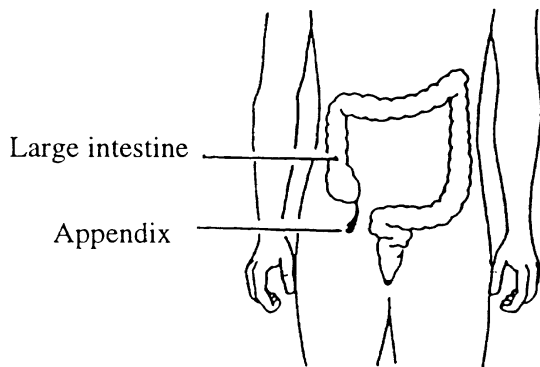


Appendicitis (possible)

What is appendicitis?

Appendicitis (ah-pen-dih-**site**-iss) is inflammation of the appendix, a small finger-shaped pouch that hangs off the end of the large intestine (see picture). If the opening to the appendix gets blocked by some material from the intestine, it becomes irritated, swollen, and infected.



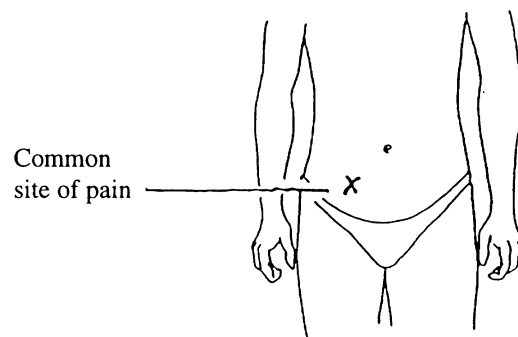
If the inflamed appendix is not removed, it can rupture (burst), spreading the infection inside the abdomen (belly). It is not uncommon for the appendix to rupture. This is more serious, but something we are able to treat. However, it is a problem we would like to prevent.

How will I know if my child has appendicitis?

Sometimes it is hard to tell right away if a child has appendicitis. Surgery is the only way to know for sure. Since many other things can cause pain and do not require surgery, it is best to wait and watch for the signs of appendicitis.

What are the signs of appendicitis?

The most common sign is pain in the abdomen. Sometimes the pain starts around the belly button, and then during the next 3 to 4 hours gets worse and moves to the right lower part of the belly (see picture).



The child may not want to move, and may lie with the right leg bent to be more comfortable. During the next 12 to 48 hours the appendix can become so swollen that it ruptures. If this happens, the whole belly will feel hard and be extremely painful.

Here are some common signs of appendicitis (other signs may also be present):

Early signs

- constant belly pain
- pain around the belly button or in the right lower part of the belly
- not hungry
- vomiting (throwing up) a few times

Late signs

- belly pain with any movement (such as going over bumps in the car)
- fever

What should I do for my child?

- Watch for signs of appendicitis.
- Allow the child to choose the position he or she wants to be in.
- Encourage sips of clear liquids, such as clear juice, Popsicles®, or sodas.
- **Do not** give food while the child is in pain.
- **Do not** give any laxatives or enemas.

When should I call the doctor?

- any signs of appendicitis.
- if pain gets worse.
- if pain is not better in 8 to 12 hours.

Questions?

This sheet is not specific to your child, but provides general information. If you have any questions, please call your clinic.

For more reading material about this and other health topics, please call or visit the Family Resource Center library, or visit our Web site: www.childrensmn.org.

Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota
Patient/Family Education
2525 Chicago Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55404
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