Dr Naveen Agarwal
GENERAL AND LAPAROSCOPIC SURGEON

Appendicectomy

What is an appendicectomy?

An appendicectomy is an operation to remove the appendix, which is a small, tube-like part of the bowel. It often needs to be performed urgently when someone has an infected and inflamed appendix (appendicitis). It is also known as appendectomy.

How to prepare for an appendicectomy?

The hospital will tell you how long you should fast (have nothing to eat or drink) before the operation. You might be given fluids through a drip (intravenously, directly into a vein) so you don't get dehydrated.

Your doctors and nurses will explain the operation. Ask questions if you're not sure about something.

What happens during an appendicectomy?

A general anaesthetic is needed for this kind of surgery.

The surgeon might do the appendicectomy laparoscopically, through several tiny cuts. Sometimes a larger cut is needed — this is known as an open appendicectomy.

During and after the surgery you will be carefully monitored.

You are likely to be given antibiotics and pain relief.

What to expect after an appendicectomy?

When you wake up, you might be disoriented or confused. You might also be in pain.

You will be told when you can safely eat and drink. You are likely to be on a drip at first, then you will progress to drinking fluids, then soft foods, and then your usual diet once your surgeon thinks you are ready. Don't rush — taking it slowly helps the bowel heal quickly and well.

You will need medicine for pain. That might be through the drip at first, then you might change to tablets. You may also need antibiotics through the drip.

You will probably stay in hospital for 1 to 2 days. Some people need to stay longer if the operation was due to a ruptured appendix, or complications occur.

Are there any risks or side effects?

All surgery has risks, as does any anaesthetic.

Possible risks include wound infection, infection inside your abdomen, bleeding, damage to the intestine or bladder, and needing to change from a keyhole to an open procedure partway through the surgery.