

MBBS (Hons) Syd. MMED (Clin Epi) FRACS
Colorectal and General Surgeon - Provider No. 065326DK

APPENDICITIS

What is appendicitis?

Appendicitis is inflammation and infection of the appendix.

What is the appendix?

The appendix is an outgrowth from the large bowel near the junction of the large and small bowel. It is near the lower part of the abdomen on the right hand side. It is a few centimetres in length and has no function at all.

What causes appendicitis?

Mostly this is unknown but there are some conditions associated with appendicitis such as specific infections and Crohn's disease.

What are the symptoms of appendicitis?

There is pain that may begin in the centre of the abdomen but then is mostly in the right lower part of the abdomen. There will be a feeling of nausea and perhaps vomiting. A fever is often present. The pain will generally worsen.

What are the complications of appendicitis?

The appendicitis may progress to perforation of the appendix. The pain will become much worse and the patient more unwell.

Is appendicitis dangerous?

Antibiotics and surgery have made appendicitis less dangerous and it is only very rarely life threatening.

What is the treatment of appendicitis?

The appendix is removed either with an open or laparoscopic (key-hole) operation. The hospital stay is usually only a day or so. You will return to normal activities in a week or so.

What are the complications of surgery?

Appendicectomy is a very safe and common operation. Rare complications include wound infection, abscesses in the abdomen and non healing at the appendicectomy site.

Are there alternatives to surgery?

Sometimes patients will respond to antibiotics alone but usually surgery is required even if delayed.

What is this?

These are special tests that investigate the strength of the anal muscles and nerves.

When is it performed?

It is part of the investigations for faecal incontinence and pelvic floor problems.

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How is it done?

Small balloons and finger probes are placed into the anal canal.

Where is it performed?

Westmead Public Hospital in the Colorectal Clinic on Monday mornings.

Do I need any preparation?

No preparation is required.

Am I asleep?

No. The test requires you to respond to some instructions.

Is it painful?

Generally not unless there is another painful anal problem. The balloon is very small.

When do I get the results?

Results will be given the same day.

What is the follow up?

This will be arranged at the clinic.