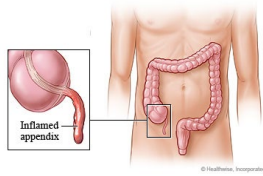


## Appendectomy in Children: What to Expect at Home

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### Your Child's Recovery

Your child had an appendectomy. The doctor removed your child's appendix either through several small cuts, called incisions, in the belly (laparoscopic surgery) or through one large incision in the belly (open surgery). The incisions leave scars that usually fade with time.

After surgery, your child may feel weak and tired for several days after coming home. Your child's belly may be swollen and painful. Your child may also feel sick to the stomach and have diarrhea, constipation, gas, or a headache. This usually goes away in a few days.

Your child's body will work just fine without an appendix. You won't have to make any changes in your child's diet or lifestyle.

This care sheet gives you a general idea about how long it will take for your child to recover. But each child recovers at a different pace. Follow the steps below to help your child get better as quickly as possible.

### How can you care for your child at home?



#### Activity

- Allow your child to slowly become more active. Have him or her rest as much as needed. Make sure your child gets enough sleep at night.
- Until the doctor says it is okay, your child should avoid lifting anything that would make him or her strain. This may include heavy milk containers, a heavy backpack, or a medium-sized pet.
- Your child may shower 24 hours after surgery. Pat the incision dry after the shower. Do not let your child take a bath for the first 2 weeks



#### Diet

- Start off with soup, toast or ice pops. Avoid dairy or fatty foods as these foods can cause stomach upset
- Have your child drink plenty of fluids to avoid becoming dehydrated.
- You may notice a change in your child's bowel habits right after surgery. This is common. If your child has not had a bowel movement after a couple of days, call the doctor.



### Medicines

- Your doctor will tell you if and when your child can restart his or her medicines. The doctor will also give you instructions about your child taking any new medicines.
- If your child is not taking a prescription pain medicine, you can give him or her an over-the-counter medicine such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) for mild pain. Read and follow all instructions on the label.



### Incision care

- If your child has strips of tape on the incision, leave the tape on for a week or until it falls off.
- Follow your doctor's instructions about cleaning the area around your child's incision.
- Keep the area clean and dry.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your child's treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if your child is having problems. It's also a good idea to know your child's test results and keep a list of the medicines your child takes.



### When should you call for help?

**Call 911** anytime you think your child may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- Your child passes out (loses consciousness).
- Your child is short of breath.

**Call the doctor now** or seek immediate medical care if:

- Bright red blood has soaked through the bandage over your child's incision.
- Your child has signs of infection, such as:
  - Increased pain, swelling, warmth, or redness.

- Red streaks leading from the incision.
- Pus draining from the incision.
- A fever.