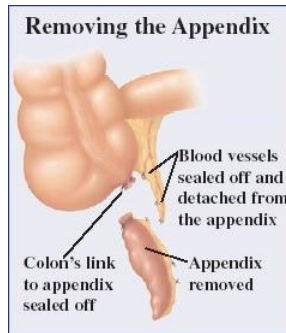


Appendectomy

The goal of **appendectomy** is to remove the appendix safely. In most cases, the surgery lasts from 30-60 minutes. If your appendix has burst, surgery may take longer.



Before Surgery

You may receive fluids, antibiotics, and other medications through an **IV** (intravenous) line. Tell your doctor if you are allergic to any medications. An anesthesiologist or nurse anesthetist will give you general anesthesia just before your appendectomy. This keeps you pain-free and allows you to sleep during the surgery.

Reaching the Appendix

One of two techniques may be used to reach the appendix. Your surgeon will discuss which is best for you.

- **Open surgery:** One incision (about 2 to 3 inches long) is made in your lower right side. A bigger incision may be used if the appendix has burst.
- **Laparoscopic surgery:** From 2 to 4 small incisions are used. One is near your bellybutton. The others are elsewhere on your abdomen. A **laparoscope**, a thin tube with a camera attached, is inserted through one incision. The camera shows the inside of your abdomen on a monitor. This image helps guide the surgery. Surgical tools are inserted in the other incisions.

Risks and Complications

- Infection or bleeding from the incision site
- Infection or swelling in the abdomen, or leakage of bowel material
- Bowel ileus (slowness of bowel muscles) or bowel blockage
- Problems from anesthesia

Finishing the Surgery

In most cases, the entire incision is closed with stitches or staples. Your surgeon may place a temporary drain in the wound or in the abdomen. This helps cure or prevent infection. If your appendix has burst, the outer layers of the incision may be left open. This lets the incision drain more easily. It may heal on its own, or be closed about 5 days later.