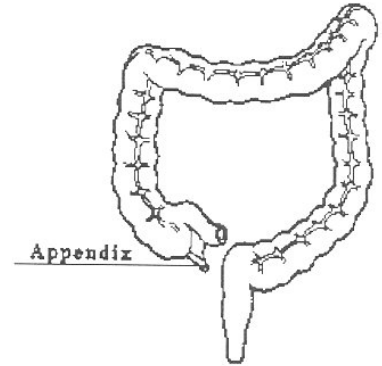


## Patient Education Appendectomy

### Dear Patient:

Appendicitis is an inflammation of the appendix. The appendix is a part of the large intestine that normally is not used. The inflammation may be caused by bacteria or a blockage. Symptoms of appendicitis include abdominal pain (may be in the lower right side of the abdomen), nausea, vomiting, constipation or diarrhea. Other symptoms of an infection include increased heart and breathing rates, increased temperature, irritability, and restlessness.



### Tests and Monitoring

Your doctor will examine you to determine if your appendix is inflamed. Some of the tests/monitoring include:

1. physical exam
2. blood tests
3. vital signs - temperature, heart rate, respiratory tests, and blood pressure

If the doctor determines that you have appendicitis, he will want to surgically remove the appendix.

### Before Your Surgery

- \* DO NOT eat or drink anything for 6 hours before the surgery.
- \* Your doctor and a nurse anesthetist will visit you regarding the type of anesthesia you will receive during your surgery. Tell the anesthetist when you last ate or drank anything. The surgery may be scheduled later if you have had anything to eat or drink within the 6 hour period.
- \* You will be taken to surgery about ½ hour prior to surgery.

An appendix can be removed by different surgical methods. The doctor will tell you what method he will use.

### Your Surgery

The surgery takes 20 - 30 minutes. The anesthetist will give you medication through your IV which will allow you to sleep through the surgery. You will be in the recovery room to awaken from the anesthesia and will be closely monitored for 1 - 1 ½ hours.

### After Your Surgery

- \* You will be taken back to your room for further monitoring for a short time.
- \* You may be drowsy if you have general anesthesia. You will be encouraged to take deep breaths and cough frequently.
- \* You will have an IV through which you will receive fluids.

Medications: The doctor will order pain medication following the surgery. The doctor may order antibiotics to be given through the IV.

Pain: Your stomach will be sore after your surgery. You can request the pain medication which the doctor has ordered. You can also support your stomach with a small pillow when getting out of bed or walking.

Diet: You will be given ice chips after surgery. If you tolerate this without nausea or vomiting, you may have clear liquids such as sprite, jello, broth, decaf coffee, etc. If tolerated, you may begin eating a normal, well-balanced diet. You should avoid food that might make you constipated, gassy, or cause you to strain to have a bowel movement.

### **General Information**

Activity: You will be encouraged to walk in your room the first day after surgery. This activity will speed up the healing process. You may tire easily and will need to have adequate rest to promote healing. Normal healing time is 1 to 2 weeks at which time some activities may be resumed. Strenuous activities may be restricted for several weeks.

Pain: The doctor may give you a prescription for pain medication to take at home. Plain Tylenol may also be used. If an antibiotic is prescribed, continue taking the antibiotic until it is gone.

Infection: If you have any of the following, call your doctor.

- ⊗ Redness or swelling around the incision
- ⊗ Yellowish, green, or foul smelling drainage from your incision
- ⊗ Steady bleeding from your incision
- ⊗ Temperature greater than your doctor's recommendation (see dismissal instructions)
- ⊗ Chills or other flu like symptoms
- ⊗ Increase in severity (or intensity) of the incision pain or any other body pain not relieved by pain medication
- ⊗ Persistent nausea and vomiting
- ⊗ Chest pain, trouble breathing, or difficulty urinating
- ⊗ Itching or rash after taking your pain medication or antibiotic

Please refer to your dismissal instruction sheet for further instructions.