



Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

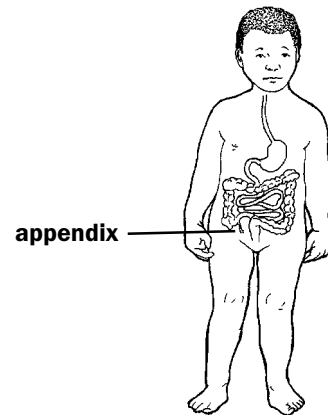
# Appendicitis

## What is appendicitis?

Appendicitis is a disease in which the appendix becomes swollen and infected.

## What is the appendix?

The appendix is a small closed tube growing out of the large intestine. We don't know why it is there or what it does.



## What will I see if my child has an appendicitis?

A child with appendicitis may go to you or the school nurse complaining of a strong stomach, belly or abdominal pain. Their pain is often in the right lower side of the belly. Many children will not be comfortable standing up straight or walking. They may feel better if they bend over and protect their bellies with their hands. The child may get the pain, then an upset stomach and start to throw up. The child may also have a fever, loose stools, less energy and be irritable.



**Many children will not be comfortable standing up straight or walking.**

## **How does the doctor know my child has an appendicitis?**

The doctor may have to examine and watch your child for several hours, and do several tests before he or she can be sure it is appendicitis. The doctor feels your child's abdomen, to see if it is firm and tender. The doctor may take an x-ray or ultrasound of your child's belly, or draw blood to see if there are signs of infection.

## **What is the treatment for appendicitis?**

Appendicitis is the most common surgical emergency in children. It is very important to treat appendicitis. Up to 70% of children under five years old who have appendicitis get a hole in the appendix (a perforation). If this is not treated it can spread infection inside the belly.

The treatment for appendicitis is an operation. Your child will need to stay in the hospital after surgery until he or she is well enough to go home. This time is different for each child.

Your child will have an IV put in. This is a small plastic tube that goes into a vein. Your child could get fluids, pain medicine or antibiotics through this tube.

If you want a copy of the handout on IVs, ask your nurse.

After surgery your child will not be able to eat right away. Your child's diet will go from clear liquids, to full liquids to solids.

Your child may have a tube in the nose down to the stomach (NG or nasogastric tube) to keep the stomach empty.

The surgical incision will be on the right side of the belly. This will leave a scar after it heals.

Once an appendix is taken out in surgery, it does not grow back.

### **Now that you've read this:**

- Tell your child's nurse what appendicitis is and how to treat it. (Check when done.)



**If you have any questions or concerns,**  
 call your child's doctor or  call \_\_\_\_\_

**If you want to know more about child health and illness,  
visit our library at The Emily Center at Phoenix Children's Hospital:  
1919 East Thomas Road in Phoenix  
602-546-1400  
[www.phoenixchildrenshospital.com](http://www.phoenixchildrenshospital.com)**

**Disclaimer**

The information provided at this site is intended to be general information, and is provided for educational purposes only. It is not intended to take the place of examination, treatment, or consultation with a physician. Phoenix Children's Hospital urges you to contact your physician with any questions you may have about a medical condition.

Thursday, Marcy 22, 2002 • DRAFT in family review  
#192 • Written by Janet L. Burnett, RN, BSN, and Shari Gow, RN, BSN  
• Illustrated by Dennis Swain



Name of Health Care Provider: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: 192

For office use: Date returned: \_\_\_\_\_  db  nb  xls

## Family Review of Handout

**Health care providers:** Please teach families with this handout.

**Families:** Please let us know what you think of this handout.

Would you say this handout is hard to read?  Yes  No

easy to read?  Yes  No

Please circle the parts of the handout that were hard to understand.

Would you say this handout is interesting to read?  Yes  No

Why or why not?

Would you do anything differently after reading  
this handout?  Yes  No

If yes, what?

After reading this handout, do you have any  
questions about the subject?  Yes  No

If yes, what?

**Is there anything you don't like about the drawings?**

Yes    No

**If yes, what?**

**What changes would you make in this handout to make it better or easier to understand?**

**Please return your review of this handout to your nurse or doctor or send it to the address below.**

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**Thank you for helping us!**