

Appendectomy

(Removal of appendix)

For an appointment call
1-888-UCH-0200

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The appendix is a small sac of intestinal tissue protruding from the area located near the small and large bowels. Human evolution has rendered the appendix useless. However, the appendix can become obstructed or inflamed due to the absorption of intestinal fluid. If allowed to progress, the appendix can rupture and release the poisonous fluid into the abdomen. This can be a life-threatening condition.

Causes and Treatment Options

An inflamed appendix usually results in pain on the lower right side of the abdomen. Fever and tenderness in the area often accompany the abdominal pain. When an appendix becomes inflamed, the only course of treatment is to remove the organ as soon as possible.

Traditionally, an appendectomy is performed through a three-inch incision that splits the abdominal muscles on the lower right abdomen. An alternative to the open surgical procedure is a laparoscopic appendectomy.

Minimally Invasive Surgery Used to Remove the Appendix

Surgeons perform the laparoscopic procedure through two or three tiny incisions, each about a quarter-inch long. A surgical instrument called a laparoscope is inserted through the incisions. A video camera at the end of the laparoscope allows the surgeon to see a magnified view of the patient's internal organs on a video monitor. The surgeon then manipulates surgical equipment, brought to the operative site through small, hollow tubes, and seals the base of the

appendix, keeping the contents intact. The surgeon then removes the appendix through the navel. Since the incisions are so small, patients typically go home the same day, experience minimal pain, and can resume normal activities within a few days.

Surgeons with the University of Chicago Hospitals Minimally Invasive Surgery Center routinely perform laparoscopic appendectomies.

The Minimally Invasive Surgery Center

The University of Chicago Hospitals Minimally Invasive Surgery Center at Louis A. Weiss Memorial Hospital is at the forefront of laparoscopic surgery. Surgeons here are pioneers in advancing minimally invasive diagnostic and therapeutic surgical procedures, many of which are now performed all over the world. For example, Constantine Frantzides, MD, Director of the Minimally Invasive Surgery Center, was the first in the world to pioneer eight different new laparoscopic procedures.

Specialists from general surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, urology, ophthalmology, orthopaedics, plastics, thoracic, and vascular surgery all work together to offer a full spectrum of minimally invasive surgeries from gallbladder and hernia

procedures to surgery of the spine, spleen, stomach, colon, and other organs. These specialists also collaborate to advance the use of laparoscopic technology to other procedures that currently require traditional open surgery.

For a consultation or second opinion with one of our minimally invasive surgical specialists, contact your primary care physician or call toll-free 1-888-UCH-0200.

OVERVIEW

Laparoscopic, or minimally invasive, surgery to repair an inflamed appendix offers many benefits over traditional open surgery, such as:

- **Only a few small marks as opposed to a three-inch scar.**
- **Reduced pain and quicker recovery.**
- **Return to normal activities in as little as two to three days.**