

INFORMATION SHEET FOR LAPAROSCOPIC APPENDICECTOMY

About the operation

The appendix is a small finger like portion of the colon that has no particular function in humans. It usually causes problems when it becomes infected, a condition called acute appendicitis. Patients with this condition have their appendix removed as an emergency.

Occasionally and under only very specific circumstances acute appendicitis is treated with antibiotics and may settle down. After this the appendix is removed at a planned elective operation several months later.

Some patients may need their appendix removed prophylactically before prolonged residency where surgical treatment is not available or difficult to reach eg the Antarctic.

The laparoscopically appendicectomy operation is usually performed through three incisions of between 5 and 10mm; at the umbilicus, above the pubic bone and on the left hand side of the abdomen. This is performed using long instruments guided by a camera relaying a video picture to a TV screen during the operation. The operation involves clipping off and dividing the small artery to the appendix and then placing a lasoo suture around the appendix, dividing it and removing it through the umbilical wound. After the operation all the incisions are closed with stitches under the skin that do not have to be removed.

THE EMERGENCY OPERATION

Patients who have their appendix removed as an emergency for acute appendicitis have usually been admitted via casualty and have the operation from a surgical ward. After the operation patients are encouraged to eat, drink and move around as they wish to provided the wounds are not too sore. Pain killers are usually needed for up to a week although most patients can go home between one and three days following surgery.

As with any operation for acute appendicitis there are complications. This includes abscess formation and wound infection which can occur up to 10 days from the operation. These are due to the appendicitis not the surgery. Antibiotics are given during the surgery to minimise this risk.

THE ELECTIVE OPERATION

Patients who have their operation as a planned procedure can have this done as a day case or with a single overnight stay. The following instructions concern these patients.

Before the Operation

There are no special preparations for this operation. You can lead a normal life on the day before surgery, but you must not have anything to eat or drink after midnight on the operation day.

Day of Operation.

If the operation is to be a day case you will stay in the ward for approximately 4 hours to recover from surgery. When you go home, go to bed and rest until the next morning.

You will be given a drink and a biscuit before returning home. You may drink normally and have a light snack on the evening of the operation if you wish, but you probably won't be hungry until the next day. Do not drink alcohol whilst you are taking painkillers or for the first 48 hours after your operation.

Take the painkilling tablets as prescribed for the first 48 hours, and then as needed after that.

There may be some pain or discomfort in your neck and shoulders; this is due to the carbon dioxide gas put into the abdomen during the operation. This will disappear within two days.

The next day

Get up and walk at least twice during the day.

You may drink freely, and eat light meals if you wish. If you do not feel hungry there is no need to eat, but drink plenty of fluids.

Continue to take painkillers regularly.

Following days

You may eat and drink what you wish, but avoid heavy meals for a week.

You may feel tired or run down for 2 - 10 days, but as soon as you feel well there is no limitation on what you may do.

You may shower or take a short bath after 48 hours. The wound dressings should then be taken off and the wound left exposed. The sticky paper strips should be peeled off in the bath after a week. It does not matter if they come off sooner.

Driving, work, sexual activity and sports may all be continued as soon as you are comfortable.

IF YOU HAVE ANY PROBLEMS AFTER THE SURGERY

For the Kingston Hospital Day Surgery Unit

Ring the unit during the day time or the Advice Line; Evening 5:30pm – 08:00am and Weekends 07850 913 965 (Emergencies only)

For Private Patients

Ring the hospital and ask for the ward sister where you were treated or the nurse in charge of the hospital or during the day ring my private secretary.

Alternatively for all patients

**Contact your General Practitioner
OR
Come to Kingston Hospital Accident & Emergency**