



INTERVAL APPENDECTOMY FOR RUPTURED APPENDICITIS

What is ruptured appendicitis?

Your child has a ruptured appendix. The appendix is the part of the intestines where the small and large bowels join. When the appendix gets blocked, it swells and becomes painful. This is called acute appendicitis. If the appendix stays in the body and continues to be blocked, it may rupture or burst, spilling fluid into the abdomen. This may lead to severe pain, fevers, nausea (upset stomach), and possibly infection.

How is ruptured appendicitis treated?

There are two overall plans that will be discussed with you and are commonly used to treat ruptured appendicitis. One treatment plan is for your child to be taken to surgery to remove the appendix soon after admission. The other treatment plan involves waiting to remove the appendix for six to eight weeks after admission and continuing IV antibiotics to treat the severe inflammation and infection inside his or her belly.

What is an interval appendectomy?

If your family and surgeon decide to treat the infection and swelling inside of and surrounding your child's appendix first without immediate surgery, and to remove the appendix at a later time, this is called an *interval* appendectomy. In six to eight weeks after admission, and after completing antibiotic treatment in the hospital and possibly at home, your child will then be taken to the operating room to remove the appendix (appendectomy).

What can I expect my child's treatment to be in the hospital before an interval appendectomy is planned?

Antibiotics and pain medicine will be given to your child by IV until your child can drink liquids well (usually a few days). A special IV, called a PICC line, may be placed in a vein in your child's arm so medicines can be easily given while s/he is in the hospital.

When will my child be well enough to go home?

1. Once your child is eating well, his or her pain is well-controlled with oral pain medicines, and s/he has returned to more regular activities, s/he may be able to go home.
2. Sometimes if your child's infection is severe enough or infection counts in the blood have not return to normal, it may be necessary for him or her to continue IV antibiotics at home. These will be given at home through the PICC line for continued treatment of the ruptured appendicitis.

What information do I need to know as my child prepares to leave the hospital?

1. If your doctor believes IV antibiotics are still needed for your child at the time of discharge, your child will continue to receive these antibiotics through his or her PICC line. The specialty nurses and discharge planners will try to arrange a special home health nurse to help you give your child IV antibiotics and help you take care of the PICC line at home.
2. Sometimes only oral antibiotics are prescribed at discharge rather than medicines given through the IV. Your surgeon will discuss this with your family prior to discharge.
3. It is important that you take your child's temperature with a thermometer as instructed by the surgery team at home. Your surgeon may also order that blood be drawn by the home health nurses through your child's PICC line to see if the IV antibiotics can be stopped.
4. After antibiotics are stopped, you will bring your child to see the surgeon to have the PICC line removed.
5. At the return visit to the surgery clinic, your child may be scheduled for surgery to remove the appendix in 4 to 6 weeks from discharge; this usually requires a one day hospital stay.
6. Your child is usually seen in the treating surgeon's outpatient clinic one to two weeks after discharge for further instructions and care.

What information do I need to know about taking care of my child at home after he or she leaves the hospital?

1. Your child should participate in quiet activity at home until the PICC line is removed, and your child returns to the surgery clinic for an appointment. No rough housing, contact sports, bike riding, or heavy lifting should be done during this time. Your child should be encouraged to return to his or her regular activity patterns once the PICC line is removed.
2. Your child may return to regular bath and shower routines 24 hours after discharge; follow the instructions of your home health nurses regarding care of the PICC line and getting it wet.
3. You should call your child's surgeon at (501) 364-4852 if your child has the following symptoms:
 - persistent fevers 100.5F or higher longer than three (3) days after discharge

- if there is a lot of blood or pus coming from his or her PICC line
- persistent vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours
- persistent abdominal pain or swelling

If you have any questions or problems, please call

Monday-Friday 8am – 4:30pm 501-364-4852 Surgery Specialty Nurses

After hours and weekends 501-364-1100 Ask for Surgeon On Call

10/24/08 Pediatric Surgery Nurse Practitioner and Specialty nurses.