

Caring for myself after Laparoscopic Appendectomy

What is Laparoscopy Appendectomy?

Laparoscopy appendectomy is a surgery to treat appendicitis - infection of the appendix. During laparoscopic surgery, surgeons use several smaller incisions and special surgical tools that they feed through the incisions to remove your appendix. Laparoscopic surgery leads to fewer complications, such as hospital-related infections, and has a shorter recovery time.

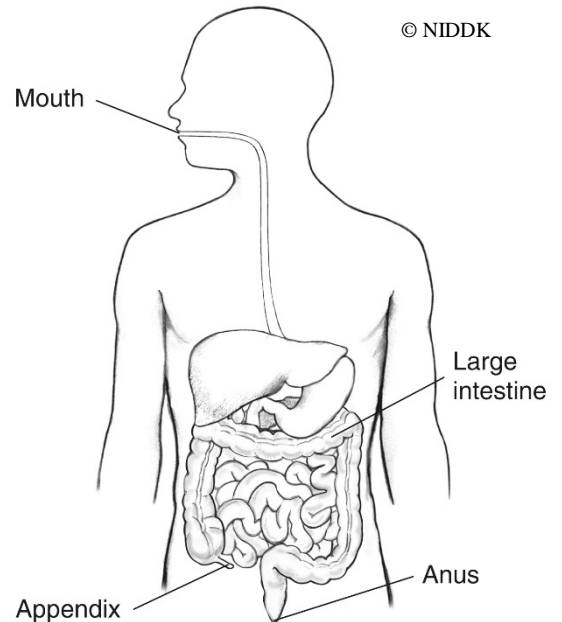
How will care for myself after the surgery?

How will I care for my incision?

- You may shower your incisions once home.
- Gently wash incisions and pat dry. Leave open to the air and dry.
- Avoid powders or creams.
- Do not take tub baths or hot tubs.
- Do not swim until the incisions are completely healed.
- Wear loose comfortable clothing. Tight fitting clothing may irritate the skin around your incision sites.
- If steri strips are present, these will fall off in about 1-2 weeks. Do not pull them off earlier.

How will I manage my pain at home?

The best strategy for controlling your pain after surgery is **around the clock** pain control with Tylenol (acetaminophen) and Motrin (ibuprofen or Advil). “Around the clock” means taking medications on a set schedule day and night. **Alternating** these medications allows you to maximize your pain control. In addition to Tylenol and Motrin, you can use heating pads or ice packs on your incisions to help reduce your pain.



How will I alternate over-the-counter pain medication?

You will take a dose of pain medication every three hours:

- Start by taking 650 mg of Tylenol (2 pills of 325 mg)
- 3 hours later take 600 mg of Motrin (3 pills of 200 mg)
- 3 hours later take 650 mg of Tylenol
- 3 hours after that take 600 mg of Motrin.

Example - if your first dose of Tylenol is at 12:00 PM this would be your schedule for the day:

Time:	Dose:
12:00 PM	Tylenol 650 mg (2 pills of 325 mg)
3:00 PM	Motrin 600 mg (3 pills of 200 mg)
6:00 PM	Tylenol 650 mg (2 pills of 325 mg)
9:00 PM	Motrin 600 mg (3 pills of 200 mg)
Continue alternating every 3 hours	

Follow this schedule around-the-clock for at least 3 days after surgery, or until you feel that it is no longer needed.

What if I have an opioid medication?

Your doctor may also prescribe an **opioid** pain medication for you (a narcotic). Take the opioid only if you need it. You can take it in addition to the over-the-counter medications schedule described above, or you can replace one of the over-the-counter doses with a dose of the opioid. Make sure you follow the amount and schedule your doctor ordered in the opioid prescription. Use the table on the last page of this handout to keep track of the medications you are taking.

Important

- **Do not take more** than 3000mg of Tylenol or 3200mg of Motrin in a 24-hour period. If you take an opioid, check to see if it contains acetaminophen and add the amount to your daily intake.)
- **Do not drink alcohol or drive** while taking an opioid pain medication.

What are my diet instructions?

- Return to your same diet as before surgery.
 - Taking smaller portions and eating more frequently during the day may help in transitioning to your regular diet (6-8 small meals per day).
- Avoid constipation. Drink plenty of water and caffeine-free fluids. Take stool softener if you are taking prescription pain medications (opioids).

What are my activity instructions?

- Do not lift anything greater than 5 - 10 pounds for 6 weeks.
- Avoid strenuous activities such as vacuuming, lifting children and groceries, doing laundry, moving furniture, mowing lawns and sports activities.
- Do not drive until your first post-op visit.
- You may climb stairs in moderation.
- Walk as much as you are able. Walking is the only exercise allowed during the first 6 weeks after surgery.
- Resume sexual activity as discussed at your first post-op visit.

When should I call my doctor?

Call if you have any of the signs and symptoms that may indicate an infection:

- Temperature above 101°F.
- Significant increase in wound pain or discomfort.
- Excessive redness, swelling, or drainage from the incision sites. It is normal to have some swelling and bruising in the groin area.
- The incisions begin to open.

You should also call if you have any of these signs or symptoms:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Chills
- Profuse (excessive) sweating
- Diarrhea
- Constipation
- Inability to urinate or completely empty bladder

What is the number to call?

Call the General Surgery Call Center at (734) 936-5738.

- If you call after business hours (Monday-Friday between 8am-5pm) the Call Center will connect you with your surgery team. If you had your surgery at St. Joseph Mercy Chelsea Hospital, please make sure to mention this.

What is my follow-up care?

You will return to the clinic for your follow-up visit about two weeks after discharge. If you have not already received an appointment, we will arrange it and notify you via the patient portal or by mail.

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