



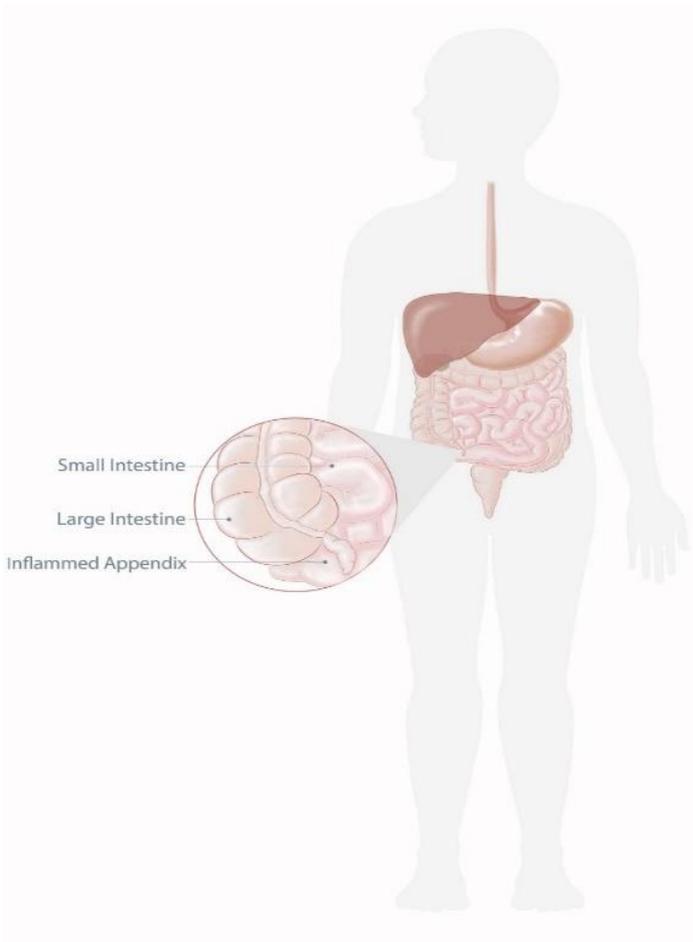
Information for  
patients and  
carers

**Abdominal pain in a child/young  
person with suspected Appendicitis**

## Introduction

This leaflet explains what will happen if your child is referred to Royal Preston Hospital with suspected appendicitis.

Appendicitis is the inflammation or infection of the appendix, a small blind-ending structure that comes off the bowel. It is the most common abdominal surgical emergency with approximately 50,000 appendectomies performed in the UK each year.



When children feel unwell and complain of abdominal pain, doctors will want to check for appendicitis as this can cause an infection which requires treatment with antibiotics or an operation to remove the appendix.

## **What should I expect if my child is referred to Paediatric Assessment Unit (PAU) with suspected appendicitis?**

If your child is referred to the hospital with abdominal pain, they will go to the paediatric assessment unit and triaged by a paediatric nurse. Observations will be taken, including blood pressure, heart rate and temperature. Pain relief will be given if required. Blood tests for signs of infection/inflammation may be needed, specifically 2 blood tests called white cell count and CRP.

Your child will be reviewed by a paediatric doctor or advanced clinical practitioner and referred to the surgical team if appendicitis is suspected.

The surgical team at Royal Preston Hospital cover the entire hospital for surgical emergencies and clinical priorities may mean that they are not immediately available. They will see your child as quickly as possible.

## **How is Appendicitis diagnosed?**

A history of abdominal pain and symptoms typical of appendicitis are combined with several investigations to help form a diagnosis.

- The first step is the physical examination. Appendicitis typically causes pain on the lower right side of the abdomen; however some children may have more generalised abdominal pain

- The second step is interpreting the blood tests. Most patients with appendicitis will have some inflammatory changes on their blood tests, although the blood tests alone may not be conclusive
- The third step in diagnosing appendicitis is a scan. The first choice is usually an ultrasound scan. Ultrasound scans on a child are a specialist investigation and are only performed by certain radiology consultants. The ultrasound department is only open Monday–Friday 9am-4pm. The radiologists will always try to accommodate requests for scans and will fit your child into the earliest appointment. This may be the following day, in which case the staff on PAU will explain how this will be arranged

In some instances, the appendix cannot be visualised with an ultrasound scan and on these occasions your child may require an additional scan such as an MRI or CT scan.

Whilst appendicitis is the most common cause for emergency surgery in the UK, around only 8% of children presenting with abdominal pain are found to have appendicitis. If the examination, blood tests and scans do not suggest appendicitis then your child may require further review by the paediatric team.

## What is the treatment for appendicitis?

If appendicitis is confirmed the surgeons will explain what treatment will be needed. Antibiotics are usually given (often through an intravenous drip, IV). Occasionally children are treated with antibiotics alone, but more often than not surgery to remove the appendix will be advised (with or without antibiotics).

The surgeon will explain the operation to you and your child and ask you to sign a consent form agreeing to go ahead with the operation. Because Royal Preston Hospital is a trauma centre, the emergency operating theatres are shared between several different teams and each operation is done according to clinical priority. Your child will be booked on the operating list, but we are often unable to say exactly

what time the surgery is planned to start at. Your child will be kept nil by mouth and given pain relief and intravenous fluids (IV) to keep them hydrated whilst they wait for theatre. The ward staff will keep you informed about any updates from the theatre team. Your child will also have regular clinical assessments by the nursing staff and doctors whilst waiting to go to theatre.

**If your child is found to have appendicitis and planned for surgery, further information can be found in our post-op appendicectomy information leaflet that the nursing staff will provide you with.**

## Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact:

Paediatric Assessment Unit: Telephone: 01772 523632

Ward 8: Telephone: 01772 522398

## Sources of further information

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk)

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

[www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)

[www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)

All our patient information leaflets are available on our website for patients to access and download:

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets)

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come to hospital and will offer you support and advice about stopping smoking this will include Nicotine Replacement Therapy to help manage your symptoms of withdrawal and the opportunity to speak to a nurse or advisor from the specialist Tobacco and Alcohol Care Team. If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact the Quit Squad Freephone 0800 328 6297.

Please ask if you would like help in understanding this information. This information can be made available in large print and in other languages.

**Gujarati:**

આ માહિતીને સમજવામાં સહાયતા જોઈતી હોય તો કૃપા કરીને પૂછો. આ માહિતી મોટા છપાણામાં અને અન્ય ભાષામાં ઉપલબ્ધ કરી શકાય છે.

**Romanian:**

Vă rugăm să întrebați dacă aveți nevoie de ajutor pentru înțelegerea acestor informații. Aceste informații pot fi puse la dispoziție în format mare și în alte limbi.”

**Polish:**

Poinformuj nas, jeśli potrzebna jest ci pomoc w zrozumieniu tych informacji. Informacje te można również udostępnić dużym drukiem oraz w innych językach

**Punjabi:**

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਸਮਝਣ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮਦਦ ਲੈਣੀ ਚਾਹੋਗੇ ਤਾਂ ਕਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਪੁੱਛੋ। ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਵੱਡੇ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਟ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮੁਹੱਈਆ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

**Urdu:**

دوسری زبانوں اور ریڑی اگر آپ کو ہی معلومات سمجھنے کے لیے مدد کی ضرورت ہے تو  
یچھیہا میں یبھیہا دست بو یسکت ہے براے مہر یان بو یچھیہا۔ معلومات

**Arabic:**

مطبوعه بأحرف كبيرة و بلغات إذا كنت تريد مساعدة في فهم هذه المعلومات يرجى أن تطلب  
أخرى يملفن تو فسير هذه المعلومات

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**Division:** Women and Children  
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