Suspected Appendicitis—Child

The appendix is a finger-shaped pouch off the first part of the colon. Appendicitis is inflammation of the appendix. Symptoms of appendicitis include pain, appetite loss, nausea, and vomiting, but these symptoms also occur for other illness and disease conditions, sometimes making appendicitis hard to diagnose. Appendicitis is most common in adolescents, less common in infants and preschool children, and rare in newborns. The most common treatment is an appendectomy, the surgical removal of the appendix. Clinical diagnosis uses scoring systems to assess the level of risk and to help determine the best imaging test to confirm diagnosis.

Imaging tests are not recommended for children identified to be at low risk.

US abdomen right lower quadrant (RLQ) or US abdomen is usually an appropriate imaging test for children identified to be at intermediate risk for appendicitis.

Children identified to be at high risk may have an appendectomy without imaging. When imaging is performed, CT abdomen and pelvis with intravenous (IV) contrast, MRI abdomen and pelvis without IV contrast, or ultrasound abdomen RLQ may be appropriate.

CT abdomen and pelvis with IV contrast, MRI abdomen and pelvis without IV contrast, or MRI abdomen and pelvis without and with IV contrast is usually appropriate following a nondiagnostic ultrasound abdomen RLQ in children with suspected acute appendicitis.

CT of the abdomen and pelvis with contrast is usually appropriate for assessment of complications of appendicitis either as initial imaging or as follow-up imaging after initial imaging shows complications such as an abscess or bowel obstruction.

— By Celena Romero, PhD, MBA, RDN, CPHQ, CPASRM, and Dianna M.E. Bardo, MD. This information originally appeared in the Journal of the American College of Radiology.

Disclaimer

This information is copied from the RadiologyInfo Web site which is dedicated to providing the highest quality information. To ensure that, each section is reviewed by a physician with expertise in the area presented. All information contained in the Web site is further reviewed by an ACR (American College of Radiology) - RSNA (Radiological Society of North America) committee, comprising physicians with expertise in several radiologic areas.

However, it is not possible to assure that this Web site contains complete, up-to-date information on any particular subject. Therefore, ACR and RSNA make no representations or warranties about the suitability of this information for use for any particular purpose. All information is provided “as is” without express or implied warranty.

Please visit the RadiologyInfo Web site at http://www.radiologyinfo.org to view or download the latest information.

Note: Images may be shown for illustrative purposes. Do not attempt to draw conclusions or make diagnoses by comparing these images to other medical images, particularly your own. Only qualified physicians should interpret images; the radiologist is the physician expert trained in medical imaging.

Copyright

This material is copyrighted by either the Radiological Society of North America (RSNA), 820 Jorie Boulevard, Oak Brook, IL 60523-2251 or the American College of Radiology (ACR), 1891 Preston White Drive, Reston, VA 20191-4397. Commercial reproduction or multiple reproduction is prohibited.