What can I do following my surgery?

- You are not to drive, consume alcohol, or sign legal documents for 24 hours.
- Ask your doctor when to restart medications such as ASA, coumadin, or anti-inflammatory drugs.
- You may resume your regular diet as tolerated. Start with a low fat, bland diet.
- You may take short walks. Increase your activity gradually. Take frequent rest periods during the day. Ask your surgeon about resuming more strenuous activity.
- Follow your surgeon’s instructions regarding heavy lifting (anything over 10 lbs.).
- If you have a waterproof dressing, you may shower in 48 hours. Tub baths should be avoided.

When should I call the doctor?

Call your doctor if you notice any of the following symptoms:

- a persistent fever above 38.6°C (101°F) or chills
- increasing redness or swelling around the incision sites
- any foul smelling drainage or discharge from the incisions
- if your pain is not controlled with the medication prescribed
- productive cough
- persistent nausea or vomiting
- new or increasing right shoulder pain

If you cannot reach your surgeon go to the Emergency Department of the nearest hospital.

References:
1. Instructions for Surgery Patients – Economou & Economou
2. Department of General Surgery – RVH
3. “Laparoscopic Appendectomy Surgery” – John Muir Medical Center, Walnut Creek Campus, Walnut Creek, California
What is the appendix?
The appendix is a small, finger-shaped out-pouching of the large intestine. It is found on the lower right side of your abdomen and is attached to the large intestine.

What is appendicitis?
Appendicitis is an infection of the appendix. It usually needs to be removed before it becomes so swollen that it forms an abscess or ruptures and causes peritonitis (an infection in the abdomen).

What is a Laparoscopic Appendectomy?
Appendectomy is surgery done to remove the appendix. For the laparoscopic method the doctor will make 3 or 4 very small incisions in the abdomen. Each incision is about 0.5 to 1 cm long. One incision is used to put gas and a telescope into the abdomen so the doctor can see the appendix well. Instruments are put into the other incisions to remove the appendix.

What risks are involved with a Laparoscopic Appendectomy?
As with any operation, complications are always possible. With this type of surgery complications could include:
- bleeding
- infection involving the incision, blood or abdomen
- injury to surrounding organs such as the bladder, intestines, blood vessels, or nerves

What happens if surgery cannot be performed by Laparoscopic technique?
Sometimes it is not possible for the surgeon to use the laparoscopic technique because it may be difficult to see or handle tissue safely. Your surgeon may decide to perform an “open” procedure either before or during the surgery. This should not be considered a failure of the procedure. Factors that might increase the possibility of changing to an “open” procedure are obesity, previous abdominal surgery causing dense scar tissue, bleeding, or inability to see organs during surgery.

How do I prepare for an Appendectomy?
- Do not eat after midnight before your procedure.
- Bathe or shower the morning of your surgery. Take all your routine a.m. medications at 6:00 a.m. with a sip of water unless otherwise instructed.
- If you are on diabetic or blood thinning medications, check with your doctor about stopping them.
- You must arrange for a responsible adult to accompany you home and stay with you overnight.

What hospital process can I expect?
- When you arrive for your surgery, you will register with a clerk in the Registration. Once you are registered, you will be asked to change into a hospital gown and housecoat.
- A nurse will then check your blood pressure, pulse, height and weight. Your health history will also be reviewed.
- You will be taken to the waiting area by the operating rooms. At this point you will meet the Anesthesiologist who will be in charge of your care during the surgery. An Operating Room nurse will also come out to meet you and accompany you to the OR.
- Following the procedure you will be taken by stretcher to the Post Anesthetic Care Unit (PACU) where your blood pressure, pulse and breathing will be monitored closely. When you are awake and stable you will be transferred to Surgical Recovery or admitted to a bed on the surgical floor.
- You will be given specific instructions to follow at home before you are discharged.

What will I experience following the procedure?
- It is normal to have some mild pain in your abdomen. Any pain and discomfort will be treated with medication. When you go home it is important to take your pain medication as prescribed by your surgeon. Some pain medications cause constipation. Eat foods high in fibre and drink plenty of water.
- If oral antibiotics are prescribed, complete the entire treatment.
- You may experience pain that goes from the chest to the right shoulder area. This is caused by the air placed in the abdomen during the surgery. It will decrease each day.
- A moderate amount of bruising at the incisions sites is normal.