



Sign Up for Our Free Newsletter >

ADVERTISEMENT

Home > Digestive Health

## 6 Serious Symptoms of Appendicitis You Need to Watch Out For

ADVERTISEMENT

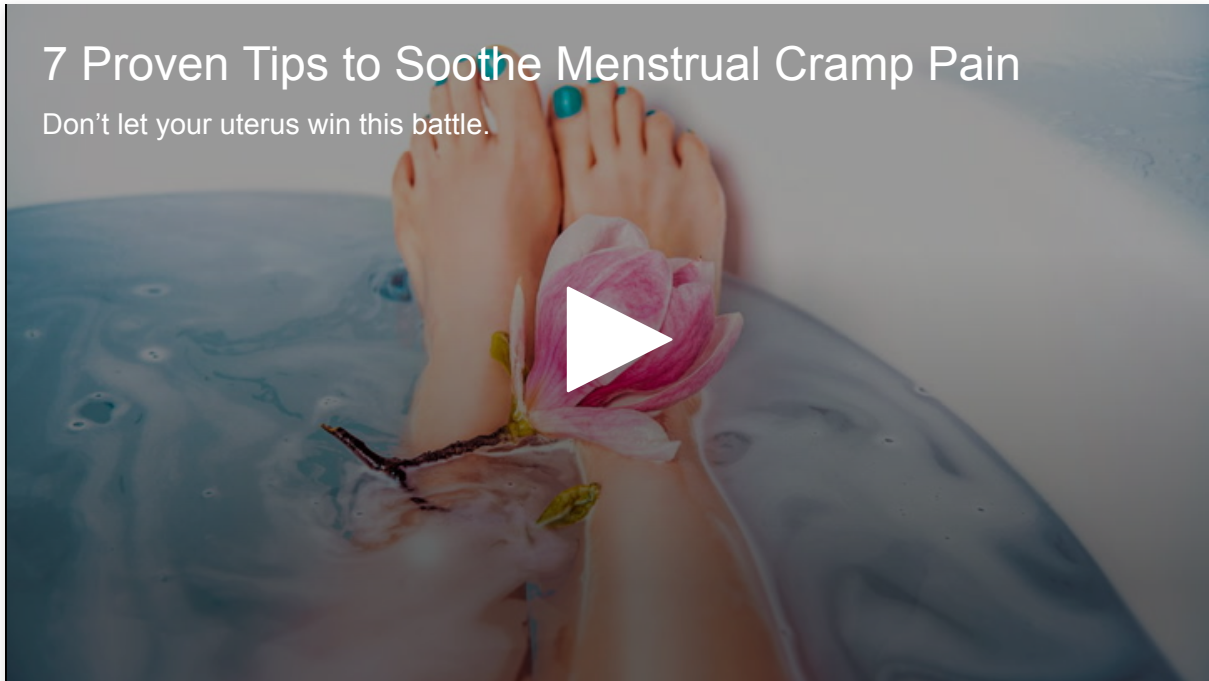


**Judy Koutsky**

Updated: Aug. 19, 2020



Learn how to recognize the early symptoms of appendicitis, from abdominal pain to difficulty moving, so you can seek treatment immediately.



## 7 Proven Tips to Soothe the Menstrual Cramp Pain

Don't let your uterus win this battle.

## What's up with your stomach, anyway?

Most people have experienced some form of stomach discomfort, whether it's a stomach virus, food poisoning, or diarrhea. (Check out the [top seven causes of stomach pains and what they mean.](#)) Less common, but still important to know about, is appendicitis. This occurs when the appendix, which is a worm-shaped pouch that sits on the lower right side of the abdomen, becomes inflamed. About five percent of the population ends up with [appendicitis](#), which is most common in teenagers and those in their early twenties, according to the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#).

Simple & Proven Remedies!

LEARN MORE

Reader's Digest

An appendix that is inflamed should be treated immediately because it can burst and release bacteria into the abdomen. This can lead to a blood infection or severe inflammation of the intestinal lining. “If it is not treated, your appendix can rupture, which can be life-threatening,” says [Jennifer Caudle](#), DO, a board-certified family physician and assistant professor at Rowan School of Osteopathic Medicine in Stratford, New Jersey.

Here’s how to recognize the early symptoms of appendicitis so you can seek treatment immediately.



# Abdominal pain

Abdominal pain is the most common and often first reported appendicitis symptoms. “The pain is generally located around the umbilicus, aka the [belly button](#), and in about 50 percent of patients, the pain migrates to the right lower quadrant of the abdomen,” says [Cedrek McFadden](#), MD a board-certified gastrointestinal surgeon in both colorectal and general surgery at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine Greenville. While a stomach ache or indigestion tends to be steady pain, with appendicitis, it can become excruciating pain in a matter of hours. (Read more about the causes of [stomach pains](#).)

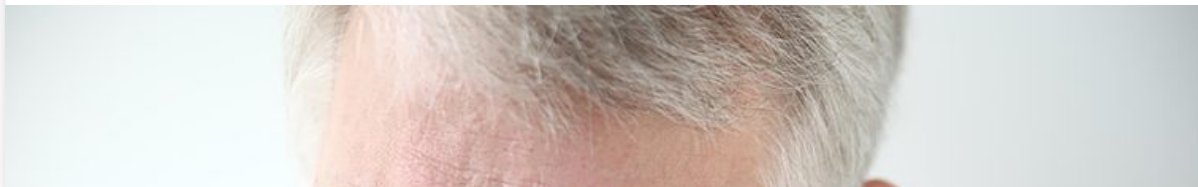




SERGIO DELLE VEDOVE/SHUTTERSTOCK

## Constipation or diarrhea

“If the appendix is positioned lower in the pelvis, the patient may have increased urinary frequency, pain with urination, or even diarrhea,” notes Dr. McFadden. Sometimes constipation can be the problem. He notes that it depends on the location of the appendix, which is normally in the right lower quadrant but is different for each person. (Find out what your bowel movements reveal about your health.)





ALICE DAY/SHUTTERSTOCK

## Nausea, vomiting, or loss of appetite

“Nausea and vomiting along with not wanting to eat, usually follow the onset of the abdominal pain,” says Dr. McFadden. So if you have severe pain combined with feeling like you are going to throw up, you should head to the doctor. Here are [15 silent signs your body may be in big trouble](#).

LLASZLO/SHUTTERSTOCK

## Fever and chills

A fever is a sign of infection. “A fever combined with chills can be a sign of appendicitis,” says Dr. McFadden. A fever means your head is hot, but if you have chills, you can put on a lot of blankets and still feel cold. The combination of hot and cold, combined with the stomach pain is a warning sign of possible appendicitis.

OVERCREW/SHUTTERSTOCK

## Gas

You can become gassy from eating too much fruit, beans, and other gas-producing foods, and that's normal. However, the combination of gas with bowel irregularity and indigestion could be a sign that something is amiss with your appendix, says Dr. McFadden.

The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases



notes that if it feels like having a [bowel movement](#) will relieve the discomfort, but it does not, then this is a possible warning sign.

AFRICA STUDIO/SHUTTERSTOCK

## Difficulty moving

Because of the pain that appendicitis causes, many people who have it have a hard time moving, says Dr. Caudle. Often, people will curl into a ball in their bed or on the couch, hoping the pain subsides. Typically, the pain may get worse when you move around, take deep breaths, cough, or sneeze. (Plus, read the [health symptoms you](#)

should never ignore.)

WAVEBREAKMEDIA/SHUTTERSTOCK

## Care

If you're experiencing any of the above symptoms, you should go to your doctor or urgent care facility right away. "Appendicitis happens when the appendix is inflamed and is a very serious condition that needs to be treated right away," says Dr. Caudle. "If it is not treated, appendicitis can lead to complications which can include a ruptured

appendix, which can be life-threatening.”

That’s why catching appendicitis early is key. “Signs of appendicitis getting worse include severe pain in the lower right part of the abdomen, rigid abdomen, pain with walking, coughing, or going over

bumps in the car. Altered mental status with these signs would be a sign of a severe systemic infection,” says [Dan Gingold](#), MD, MPH, academic fellow and chief resident at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, department of emergency medicine in Baltimore.

Surgery is the usual treatment for appendicitis. (Next, don’t miss these [12 other things your stomach is trying to tell you](#), too.)

#### + Sources

---

*Originally Published: September 12, 2017*

## Judy Koutsky

[Judy Koutsky](#) is an award-winning writer and editor whose work has appeared in [over 30 publications](#) including *WebMD*, *Prevention*, *Conde Nast Traveler*, *Travel + Leisure*, *Redbook*, *Parents*, and *Scholastic*. Her

article topics include health, psychology, parenting, lifestyle, and travel. She also works on custom publishing projects and has worked with companies such as

Enfamil, Pampers, and Procter & Gamble. Judy's earlier work included management positions at Time Inc. and Hearst. She was previously Editorial Director of KIWI; Executive Editor of Parenting.com; and Editorial Director/GM of Hachette Filipacchi New Media.

# THE Healthy



OUR BRANDS [Reader's Digest](#) | [Taste of Home](#) | [Family Handyman](#) | [Birds & Blooms](#)

[About The Healthy](#) | [Our Medical Review Board](#) | [Advertise with Us](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Terms of Use](#) |

[Privacy Policy](#) | [Your CA Privacy Rights](#) | [Do Not Sell My Personal Information – CA Residents](#) |

[Accessibility Statement](#) | [About Ads](#)

© 2021 Trusted Media Brands, Inc.

## Sign Up For Our Newsletter

SIGN UP



Everyday Simple &  
Proven Remedies!

BUY NOW