Antibiotics May Replace Surgery in Treating Appendicitis in Kids

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Children rushed to the ER with a burst appendix might be able to avoid surgery all together. This is because antibiotic drugs may work just as well at treating the condition, according to a new findings published in the Journal of the American College of Surgeons and reported by The Washington Post.

Appendicitis occurs when the appendix, a small tube located between the small and large intestine, becomes infected and inflamed and eventually ruptures. Traditionally, doctors treat the condition with emergency surgery to remove the organ to avoid widespread infection in the body.

But when researchers from Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, gave 77 appendicitis patients the choice between having the traditional surgery or trying out antibiotics to treat their illness, they found the drugs worked just as well. Out of the 30 patients who chose the medication option, 27 were cured within a month.

What's more, the study's antibiotic group also had far fewer disability days than kids who went under the knife (3 versus 17) and were able to return to school an average of two days earlier.

But before doctors can give up appendix surgery all together, researchers say more study is needed to determine the therapy's long-term success rate, as well as the safety and cost-effectiveness of the new antibiotic option.

Appendicitis is one of the most commonly misdiagnosed medical conditions among children. Click here for more information.

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