

# Study shows appendectomies not a threat to fertility

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(Medical Xpress) -- Having the appendix removed does not affect a woman's chance of having a baby, according to a new study from researchers at the University of Dundee.

The researchers found that women who'd had their appendix removed were actually more likely to get pregnant later on than women who hadn't had the common surgery.

The procedure is one of the most common surgeries and is usually done to treat appendicitis, a potentially life-threatening [inflammation](#) of the appendix.

Appendicitis, ruptured appendixes and severe pelvic infections after appendectomies were thought to increase the risk of infertility. Some reports have also suggested that the surgical trauma of appendectomy itself might hurt a woman's fertility, possibly because it could leave [scar tissue](#) sticking to the [fallopian tubes](#) and obstruct an egg on its way to the [uterus](#).

"A lot of patients think they may become infertile after appendectomy," said Mr Sami Shimi, a surgeon from the University of Dundee, who worked on the new study. "But when I looked at the reports supporting this, they were really weak."

Mr Shimi and his colleagues decided to do a bigger study, using a large patient database. The team utilised one of the world's largest digital

repositories of [medical records](#) from primary care, the General Practice Research Database in the UK.

They found that out of more than 76,000 women who'd undergone an appendectomy, 39 percent had a first pregnancy in the decade following the procedure.

The rate for twice as many women who hadn't had the surgery was only 28 percent. Although the follow-up time was slightly shorter for this group, the fertility gap remained after accounting for age, birth control use, number of previous hospitalisations and other factors.

Mr Shimi said the results now required further research to determine whether there is something unique about women who present with pain and require appendectomies.

But he said that the results do show that women who need an [appendectomy](#) should not worry about fertility problems. Fears about [infertility](#) after appendectomy are unfounded. Conversely, we are not saying that women should have an appendectomy to increase their chances of fertility.

The results of the study are published in the journal of *Fertility and Sterility*.

Provided by University of Dundee

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