

Adrenal Tumours

What Are Adrenal Tumours?

Adrenal tumours are abnormal growths that develop in the adrenal glands, which are situated on top of each kidney. These tumours can be classified as benign (non-cancerous) or malignant (cancerous). Adrenal tumours often lead to overproduction of hormones, causing various medical conditions such as Cushing's syndrome, hyperaldosteronism, and pheochromocytoma. They can occur in people of all ages and may require medical intervention to alleviate symptoms and prevent complications.

What Are The Surgical Approaches?

Surgery is a common treatment option for adrenal tumours, particularly when the tumour is large, causing hormone imbalances, or suspected to be cancerous. Two primary surgical approaches are used:

1. **Laparoscopic Adrenalectomy:** This minimally invasive technique involves making small incisions in the abdomen and inserting a thin, flexible camera (laparoscope) to guide the surgeon. Specialised instruments are used to remove the tumour through the small incisions, minimising trauma and speeding up recovery.
2. **Open Adrenalectomy:** In cases of larger tumours or when laparoscopy is not feasible, an open surgical approach is employed. A larger incision is made in the abdomen or back, allowing the surgeon direct access to the adrenal gland for tumour removal.

What Does Surgery Involve?

The surgical procedure for adrenal tumour removal involves the following steps:

1. **Anaesthesia:** General anaesthesia is administered to ensure the patient is asleep and pain-free during the surgery.
2. **Incision:** Depending on the chosen surgical approach, small incisions or a larger one are made to access the adrenal gland.
3. **Tumour Removal:** The tumour, along with a margin of healthy tissue, is carefully dissected and removed from the adrenal gland.
4. **Closure:** The incisions are sutured closed, and the surgical site is dressed and bandaged.

How To Prepare For Surgery?

Before the surgery, patients should:

1. Inform their healthcare provider about any medications, supplements, or allergies.
2. Follow fasting guidelines provided by the medical team.
3. Undergo pre-operative tests, such as blood work and imaging, to assess overall health.

How Long Does Surgery Take?

The duration of the surgery varies depending on factors like the tumor's size, location, and chosen surgical approach. Laparoscopic adrenalectomy typically takes around 1 to 2 hours, while open adrenalectomy might take 2 to 4 hours.

What Happens After Surgery?

After surgery, patients can expect:

1. **Recovery:** Hospital stay duration varies but is usually a few days for laparoscopic surgery and slightly longer for open surgery.
2. **Pain Management:** Pain medication is provided to manage post-operative discomfort.
3. **Activity:** Gradual resumption of daily activities is recommended, avoiding strenuous activities initially.
4. **Follow-up:** Regular follow-up appointments are scheduled to monitor healing and overall health.

It's essential for patients to adhere to post-operative instructions, take prescribed medications, and attend follow-up appointments to ensure a smooth recovery and optimal outcomes.