



## **Adrenalectomy**

Adrenalectomy is the surgical removal of one or both (bilateral adrenalectomy) adrenal glands. It is usually advised for patients with tumors of the adrenal glands. The procedure can be performed using an open incision (laparotomy) or laparoscopic technique.

The adrenal glands are two small organs, one located above each kidney. They are triangular in shape and about the size of a thumb. The adrenal glands are known as endocrine glands because they produce hormones. These hormones are involved in control of blood pressure, chemical levels in the blood, water use in the body, glucose usage, and the “fight or flight” reaction during times of stress. These adrenal-produced hormones include cortisol, aldosterone, the adrenaline hormones – epinephrine and norepinephrine – and a small fraction of the body’s sex hormones (estrogen and androgens).

Diseases of the adrenal gland are relatively rare. The most common reason that a patient may need to have the adrenal gland removed is excess hormone production by a tumor located within the adrenal. Most of these tumors are small and not cancers. They are known as benign growths that can usually be removed with laparoscopic techniques. Removal of the adrenal gland may also be required for certain tumors even if they aren’t producing excess hormones, such as very large tumors or if there is a suspicion that the tumor could be a cancer, or sometimes referred to as malignant. Fortunately, malignant adrenal tumors are rare.

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