

# Adrenal Adenoma

One-sided tumors or masses of the adrenal gland are common. They are categorized as either functional (hormone-secreting) or nonfunctional, and as either benign or malignant (cancerous).

- The majority of adrenocortical tumors are benign, nonfunctioning adenomas that are discovered incidentally on abdominal imaging studies.
- Others are benign, hormone-secreting adenomas that cause Cushing's syndrome, primary aldosteronism, or much less commonly, virilization (developing of male features in a female).
- Adrenocortical carcinomas (ACCs) are rare, frequently very aggressive tumors that may be functional, and cause Cushing's syndrome and/or virilization, or nonfunctional, and present as an abdominal mass or as an incidental finding.
- Pheochromocytomas are another rare form of adrenal tumors.

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## Adrenal Surgery

Unilateral adrenalectomy (removal of the entire adrenal gland on one side) is the standard treatment for most patients with hormone-secreting adenomas, adrenal cancer, and for many with larger adrenal masses discovered on diagnostic test done for other reasons. For patients with nonfunctional tumors less than 4 cm in size with a benign imaging appearance, treatment is generally to watch with follow up imaging.

Adrenalectomy can be done by either an open surgery or laparoscopic surgery, both are done under general anesthesia with the patient completely asleep. An open surgery would involve an incision on the side of the abdomen. The surgeon will decide which option is better depending on the patient's particular circumstances.

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## Risks of Adrenal Surgery Include (but not limited to):

- Bleeding
- Infection
- Injury to the kidney or other surrounding organs
- Need for further surgery or other procedures

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## Recovery after Adrenal Surgery

Most patients will be hospitalized for 2-5 days or more depending on their individual recovery, whether the surgery was done open or laparoscopic, and the reasons for the surgery. Most patients should be able to resume normal activities in 2-4 weeks. Ask your doctor about specific activity restrictions after surgery.