

Hernia

Definition of a hernia: A hernia develops when there is a weakness or defect in the abdominal wall allowing tissue (usually intestine or fat) to bulge through this weakness.

Common Causes of Hernias

Most often a hernia is from development before birth. These types of hernias occur when the lining around the abdominal organs does not close properly before birth or reopens later in life. Or it can be the result of an injury.

You may be more prone to developing hernias if you:

- Smoke
- Are overweight
- Have a chronic cough
- Have chronic constipation
- Lift heavily or strain frequently
- Have had previous abdominal surgery

Common Types of Hernias

- Inguinal hernia appears as a bulge in the groin or scrotum
- Femoral hernia appears as a bulge in the lower abdomen, groin or upper thigh
- Ventral/Incisional hernia occur in the abdomen at a site of weakness or at a site of a previous surgery
- Umbilical hernia appears as a bulge around the belly button

Symptoms

- Groin or abdominal discomfort or pain which is worse with bending, lifting or long periods of standing
- A lump in the groin, scrotum or abdomen
- The lump may increase in size with coughing, lifting or straining
- The lump is typically soft and can be reduced with lying flat and gentle pressure

If you have a hernia bulge that is very painful and/or cannot be pushed back into place you may have an incarcerated hernia. With an incarcerated hernia, the intestine may become trapped resulting in poor blood supply. If this occurs you need to seek immediate medical attention as this may require emergent medical intervention.

Treatment

Most hernias require surgical repair by repositioning the bulging tissue back into the abdominal cavity and securing the weakened tissues. Often a mesh material is used to help repair the weakness and prevent further hernias.

Recovery

Returning to work/activities

- Most patients with inguinal or umbilical hernias are discharged home the same day of their surgery
- Please expect a longer hospital stay and recovery if you have a larger hernia repair
- Typically patients can expect to return to light duty work 1-2 weeks following surgery
- Most patients need to avoid heavy lifting for several weeks after surgery and your surgeon can provide more detailed instruction in this regard
- No driving or operating machinery while taking prescription pain medication
- If return to work notes are needed or paperwork is required please contact the office



Diet

Start with clear liquids the day of surgery and slowly advance to your usual diet

Pain

- Typically there is a minimal to moderate amount of incisional pain after surgery
- An ice pack is recommended intermittently for the first 48 hours to help reduce pain & swelling
- For males, an athletic supporter is recommended after surgery if you are having an inguinal hernia repair
- Most patients are provided a prescription for medication to take on a short term basis to help relieve the discomfort
- If pain medication refills are needed we require you contact our office during regular business hours

Incision/Wound Care

- A small amount of bleeding or drainage is expected in the first 24-48 hours
- Bruising near the incision is common to develop in the first 24-48 hours
- Additional instructions regarding your dressings or bandages will be given after surgery
- Typically you can shower 48 hours after surgery
- No bathtubs, hot tubs or swimming is recommended for at least 2 weeks
- For inguinal hernia repairs, swelling or bruising on the penis and scrotum is also common and will resolve over the first 1-2 weeks

Follow-up Care

- You may be asked to see a member of the surgery team 2 weeks following surgery or discharge from the hospital
- Please contact the office and our staff will happily assist you in scheduling your appointment
- It is also not uncommon to see a bulge after surgery due to fluid filling the previous hernia space. This is not a recurrence of the hernia. If there is any associated increasing tenderness or redness before your postoperative visit is scheduled, please call our office

**Call your surgeon at 763-780-6699
for the following after surgery:**

- Temperature greater than 101 degrees Fahrenheit
- Increased pain
- Increased bleeding or drainage
- Pus-like drainage, increasing redness, swelling, tenderness, or warmth at the incision site
- Persistent nausea or vomiting



Our professional surgeons and staff work with patients and referring physicians in a spirit of partnership to ensure that we deliver the best possible care. We welcome consultations, questions and suggestions.

Specialists in General Surgery
763-780-6699
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