

About Hernias

What is a hernia?

A hernia is a gap or space in the strong tissue that holds muscles in place. A hernia occurs when the inside layers of the abdominal muscle have weakened, resulting in a bulge or tear. This can allow a loop of intestine or abdominal tissue to push into the sac. The hernia can cause discomfort, severe pain, or other potentially serious problems that could require emergency surgery. Both men and women can get a hernia. A hernia does not get better over time, nor will it go away by itself. There are no exercises or physical therapy regimen that can make a hernia go away.

How do I know if I have an inguinal hernia?

The common areas where hernias occur are in the groin (inguinal), belly button (umbilical), and the site of a previous operation (incisional).

It is usually easy to recognize a hernia. You may notice a bulge under the skin. You may feel pain or discomfort when you lift heavy objects, cough, strain during urination or bowel movements, or during prolonged standing or sitting. Other times a hernia may be detected by your doctor on a routine physical examination.

Severe, continuous pain, redness, and tenderness are signs that the hernia may be entrapped or strangulated. These symptoms are cause for concern and you should immediately contact your physician or surgeon.

What causes an inguinal hernia?

The wall of the abdomen has natural areas of potential weakness. Hernias can develop at these or other areas due to heavy strain on the abdominal wall, aging, injury, an old incision or a weakness present from birth. Anyone can develop a hernia at any age. Most hernias in children are congenital. In adults, a natural weakness or strain from heavy lifting, persistent coughing, difficulty with bowel movements or urination can cause the abdominal wall to weaken or separate.

What are the advantages of laparoscopic inguinal hernia repair?

Laparoscopic Hernia Repair is a technique to fix tears in the abdominal wall (muscle) using small incisions, telescopes and a patch (mesh). Laparoscopic repair offers a shorter return to work and normal activity for most patients.

Laparoscopic Inguinal Hernia Repair

What is laparoscopic hernia surgery?

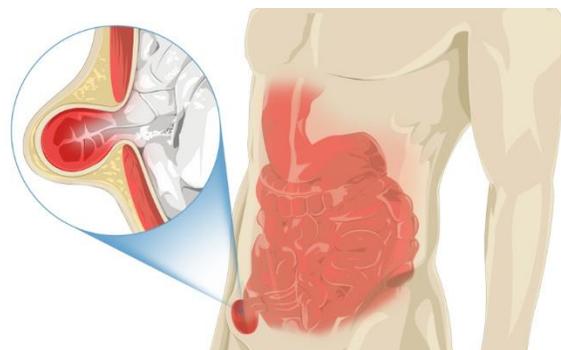
Laparoscopic surgery uses several small incisions instead of a longer incision necessary for open surgery. This is associated with less post-operative pain and a quicker recovery than open surgery. You can go back to regular activities more quickly.

What Preparation is Required?

Most hernia operations are performed on an outpatient basis, and you will go home on the same day. You should shower the night before or morning of the operation with an antibiotic soap. After the midnight before the operation, you should not eat or drink anything except certain medications. Drugs such as aspirin, blood thinners, anti-inflammatory medications may need to be stopped temporarily for several days to a week prior to surgery.

How is Laparoscopic Hernia Repair Done?

- You will have general anesthesia with a breathing tube for your surgery. This means you are asleep during surgery.



- An incision is made near your belly button and the abdomen is filled with gas to create space for the operation. Two more small incisions are made.
- A small camera and long narrow instruments are used to repair the hernia from behind the abdominal wall. A small piece of surgical mesh is placed over the hernia defect.
- When surgery is finished, your incisions are closed with dissolvable stitches and surgical glue. These disappear as you heal, so they do not need to be removed later.



What are the Possible Complications of Laparoscopic Hernia Repair?

The primary complications of any operation are bleeding and infection, which are uncommon with laparoscopic hernia repair. There is a very low risk of injury to the urinary bladder, the intestines, blood vessels, nerves or the sperm tube going to the testicle. Difficulty urinating after surgery can occur and may require placement of a catheter, or tube to drain the bladder after surgery. Bruising and swelling of the scrotum, the base of the penis, and the testicles is not uncommon with open and laparoscopic repair. This will gradually resolve on its own in most patients. Any time a hernia is repaired it can come back but this long-term recurrence rate is low in patients who undergo laparoscopic repair.

After Surgery

Going Home

You will go home the day you have your surgery. You will need someone to drive you home from surgery.

Pain

You will feel some pain at your incision sites after surgery. You might also have pain in your shoulders. This is from the gas put into your abdomen during the operation. The shoulder pain should go away in 24 to 48 hours. If you are able, take Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and ibuprofen (Advil®) every 6 hours. Putting ice on your incision sites may also help. You will also be prescribed a small amount of narcotic pain medicine to help you with pain.

Diet

The day of surgery you may have some nausea, and we recommend you start slow with your diet. The day after surgery you may eat or drink whatever you like, there are no dietary restriction.

Activities

You should be as active as your body allows. We recommend walking. You can go up and down stairs on the day of your surgery. You may take a shower the next day. Light exercise like biking, jogging, walking is allowed as tolerated.

Restrictions

You may drive 24 hours after you had anesthesia if you are not taking narcotic pain medicines. No heavy lifting over 15 lbs. or strenuous activity for 2 weeks until your follow-up appointment. Showers are OK. No bathing, swimming, or submerging the incisions in standing water for at least 3-4 weeks.

What should I watch for after surgery?

Fever over 101 degrees F (38.5 C), severe pain or swelling in the belly, blood, pus or redness coming from any of the incisions that spreads or gets worse. Pain that your medicines do not help.

Follow-up

Please call our office at (503) 914-0024 to schedule an appointment 2 weeks after surgery.