

After an Open Hernia Repair

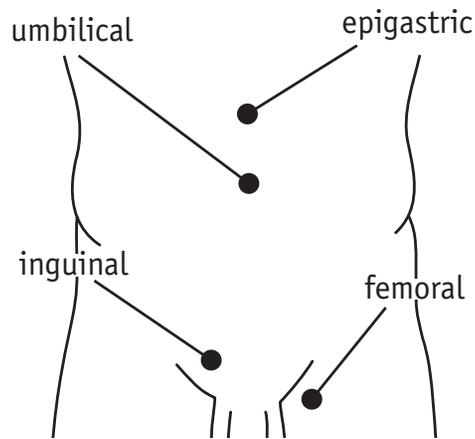
Discharge Instructions

Inguinal

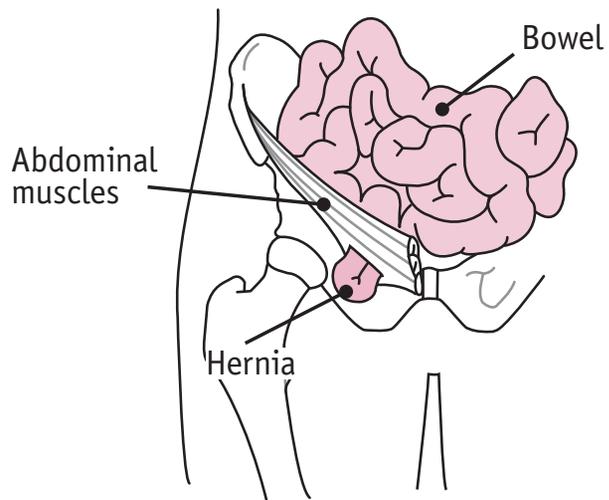
Femoral

Umbilical

Types of Hernia



Inguinal Hernia



General Information

- Hernias are caused by a birth defect, or a combination of pressure and an opening or weakness in the muscle.
- The pressure pushes internal organs or tissue through the opening or weak spot.
- Anything that causes an increase in pressure in the abdomen can cause a hernia, including obesity, lifting heavy objects, or persistent coughing or sneezing.
- This may result in a bulge in your abdomen and pain when you lift, cough or strain.
- During the surgery, the bulging tissue is replaced back inside the muscle wall. Then the opening in the wall is repaired and strengthened.
- The surgery is done in the operating room under a general or local anesthetic with sedation. The area may also be frozen with local anesthetic.
- It takes about 30–60 minutes to do this surgery.

Important Points

Bleeding/swelling

- There may be a small amount of drainage/blood on the bandage. This is not usually a cause for concern.
- If bleeding occurs, apply firm steady pressure over the area for 10–15 minutes or until the bleeding stops.

Dressings

- If you have steri-strips (small tapes) on your incision, let them fall off naturally or remove after 10 days. There is no need to replace them.
- If you have a dressing, remove it in 1–2 days.
- If there is any drainage from the incision apply a clean dressing. Gauze dressings may be purchased at any drugstore.
- You may take a shower any time. Gently pat the area with a towel.
- Avoid soaking in a bath until the wound is healed.
- If you have stitches or staples, your surgeon will remove them at your follow up visit.

Pain

- Take pain medications as soon as you begin to feel discomfort.
- Do not wait until you are in pain.
- Take the pain medications **regularly** as ordered by your surgeon. As your pain becomes less, you may take less of the prescribed medication and substitute plain Tylenol or Advil.
- Do not take Aspirin (ASA) until advised by your doctor.
- Do not drink alcohol when taking pain medications.
- You may apply covered ice packs over the dressing for 10–20 minutes every hour (as needed) to reduce swelling and pain. **Do not put ice in direct contact with the skin.**
- A plastic bag with ice cubes or a bag of frozen peas placed in a pillow-case or towel works well (Do not eat peas after using as an ice pack).

Diet

- When you get home, you can drink or eat what you feel like.
- A well balanced diet is important for wound healing. Many pain medications cause constipation. To prevent this, include high fiber and fluids in your diet, for example:
 - Grain breads
 - Bran cereals (All Bran, Bran Buds, Fruit & Fiber)
 - Fruits (prunes, raisins, dates, bananas, apples)
 - Vegetables (broccoli, corn, beans, potatoes)
 - 8 glasses of water (or juice, clear tea or broth) per day (unless otherwise advised by your doctor).
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist about a mild laxative or stool softener, if needed.

Activity

- Most patients have had local anesthetic ("freezing") injected around the incision. This may cause some **unexpected weakness in your leg** on the side of the surgery. This may last several hours. Even though you can walk, it is best to take precautions against falling.
- Avoid strenuous exercise/activity for at least 2 weeks.
- Avoid heavy lifting/straining for _____ days.
- Light exercises such as walking will help you recover. As you feel stronger, you will be able to take longer walks and increase your activity level.
- Avoid contact sports and swimming for 3 weeks.

Follow-Up Appointment

- Contact your doctor's office to arrange a follow-up appointment.

Notify the Doctor or go to the nearest Emergency Department or Urgent Care Centre if any of the following happens:

- Chills, fever, a temperature more than 38.5°C (101.3°F).
- Wound drainage has stopped, and then started again or there is a noticeable change in the type of drainage (bright bleeding or bad-smelling).
- Increased redness and/or heat around the wound.
- You cannot stop vomiting, or you are not able to drink anything for 24 hours because you feel too sick.
- Increased or constant pain that is not relieved by prescribed pain medication.
- You have pain, aching or redness in your calf and/or swelling of the leg.
- You have shortness of breath or chest pain (unusual for you).
- You are unable to pass your urine for more than 8 to 10 hours even though you are drinking fluids.

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