

# Hernia Repair

Information for patients

Please contact a member of nursing staff at the appropriate day unit if you wish to discuss your operation before your admission to hospital. (Contact numbers can be found at the end of this leaflet)

## The Procedure

A hernia is a protrusion of intestines or fat through a weakness in the lining or muscle of the abdomen or groin area. This causes a bulge that may or may not be painful.

There are various sites where a hernia may occur and the name of the hernia indicates the site. The inguinal hernia is the most common and occurs in the groin. Other sites include umbilical (around the tummy button) and femoral (at the top of the leg). An incisional hernia may also occur following surgery (at the site of the scar).

A hernia repair can be carried out under local or general anaesthetic.

To repair a hernia, the intestines or other protruding tissues are returned to their normal position and the weakness in the abdominal wall is repaired. Sometimes it is necessary to support the repair with a mesh patch stitched inside the operation site.

## Before your operation

This procedure can be carried out as day surgery or an inpatient, with some patients requiring an overnight stay in hospital. If you are having a general anaesthetic, you will have a Pre-assessment appointment to assess your suitability for day surgery, before you are given a date for your operation. At this appointment the nurse will take details of your:

- Medical history
- Current medication
- Home care arrangements after you have been discharged from hospital.
- You must have somebody to collect you from hospital and somebody with you for 24 hours after your surgery.

Please use this opportunity to ask any questions about your surgery and after-care. The nurse will give you instructions about preparing for you operation, which will include advice about:

- Having a bath or shower before you come to the hospital
- Eating and drinking
- Taking your normal medication, if appropriate
- Returning to work after surgery

The Surgical Admissions team will contact you to agree a date for your surgery.

## On the day of surgery

Please bring in all your medications you are currently taking including inhalers.

You should have a bath or shower before you come to hospital. If you wear contact lenses, you will need to remove them prior to your operation. Please bring your spectacles or an extra pair of contact lenses with you.

Please bring a pair of slippers and a dressing gown into hospital with you. Valuables and large amounts of money (over £10) must be left at home.

On admission to the admission unit you will be greeted by a nurse who will check that your details are correct and help you to prepare for your surgery.

The surgeon and the anaesthetist will talk to you (if you are having a general anaesthetic) and you will be invited to ask any questions you may have. The surgeon will also ask you to sign a consent form for the operation and if appropriate, your operation site will normally be marked.

A member of staff will escort you, as you walk if you are able to, to the operating theatre.

## Following your operation

You will be transferred to the ward area where nurses will continue to monitor your condition. If you feel any discomfort, please inform the nurse looking after you, so that pain relief can be given. As long as you do not feel sick (after a general anaesthetic) you must have something to eat or drink, prior to going home. You will also need to pass urine before you go home.

After about 1-2 hours, if the nurse feels you are sufficiently recovered, you may be discharged home.

## Care at home

You will need a relative/friend or carer who can escort you home and stay with you for the first 24 hours after your procedure.

We advise you that you have a supply at home of simple pain killers such as paracetamol and ibuprofen. Please take only as directed on the packaging. If you require any further medication the hospital will supply this.

If you have had an inguinal hernia repair the surgeon may recommend that you wear a scrotal support. If you do not like wearing the support, close fitting underpants will give some support.

Your wound will probably have dissolvable stitches which can take 10 days to dissolve completely. The dressing can be removed after 48 hours. The wound should then be left uncovered, and you will be given advice you about your wound care before you go home.

You should mobilise gently, gradually building up to normal activities; this includes sexual intercourse. Light exercise, such as walking, should be undertaken during the first two weeks.

Avoid any heavy lifting for at least 6 weeks. You may drive when you feel you can safely perform an emergency stop. This will not be for the first 48 hours following your surgery. Please check that your insurance policy does not prohibit you from driving for a longer period, following general anaesthetic or surgery.

You will need 1-2 weeks away from work, depending on your occupation. Your surgeon will be able to advise you about this and your G.P. will provide the necessary sickness certificates.

## **What are the possible complications?**

### **Minor**

- Slight oozing of blood from operation site
- Infection at the operation site

### **Moderate**

- Recurrence of the hernia

## **Please contact your GP, if you develop:**

- A temperature
- Fresh bleeding or bruising
- Redness or swelling at the operation site
- Pus or drainage from the operation site
- Prolonged or severe pain

## **Will I need to come back to the hospital?**

We will tell you before you go home if you need to come back to the outpatient clinic. We will also send you an appointment date and time in the post.

**If you have any problems or cause for concern please contact:**

Your General Practitioner

The relevant Day Unit:

**David Beevers Day Unit, St James's University Hospital  
(Mon 8 a.m. to Saturday 12 noon inclusive) 0113 206 5786**

**Wharfedale General Hospital Day Unit 0113 392 1713**

You last had painkillers at:

**Notes**

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