

*Better
Together*

Patient information

Hernia Repair

Surgical Division Royal Liverpool Hospital and
Broadgreen Hospital

Your consultant has recommended that you have an operation to repair your hernia.

What is a Hernia?

A hernia is a weakness in a muscle wall and can happen at various sites in the body.

What are the benefits of having my hernia repaired?

- Reducing the painful lump.
- Reducing the risk of developing a strangulated hernia.

What are the risks of having my hernia repaired?

The risks of haemorrhage (bleeding) or chronic pain following surgery are about 5% of all hernia repairs. The risk of your hernia returning is 2%. Infection can complicate any surgical operation, but is uncommon.

Are there any alternative treatments available?

You may wish to wear a truss (surgical support) but this is usually uncomfortable and only holds the hernia in.

What will happen if I don't have any treatment?

The hernia will probably get bigger and there is always a risk of strangulation which can be life threatening.

Will I be given an anaesthetic?

You will be given a general or local anaesthetic. General anaesthesia is drug-induced unconsciousness: it is always provided by an anaesthetist, who is a doctor with specialist training. Local anaesthetic is drug-induced numbness: it may be provided by an anaesthetist, surgeon or other healthcare professional, depending on the technique used.

Unfortunately, both general and local anaesthesia can cause side effects and complications. Side effects are common, but are usually short-lived: they include nausea, confusion and pain. Complications are very rare, but can cause lasting injury: they include awareness, paralysis and death.

There is a risk of damage to teeth, particularly caps or crowns and veneers. Your anaesthetist will take every care, but occasionally damage can occur.

The risks of anaesthesia and surgery are lower for those who are undergoing minor surgery, and who are young, fit, active and well.

You will be given an opportunity to discuss anaesthetic options and risks with your anaesthetist before your surgery.

For further information about anaesthetics please ask for “You and Your Anaesthetic” (PIF 344).

If you are worried about any of these risks, please speak to your Consultant or a member of their team.

The day of your operation

- Please have a bath or shower before your operation (at home if you are a day case patient).
- Please make sure you have nothing to eat for six hours before your admission time if you are a day case patient.
- **Clear fluids can be taken up until two hours prior to admission time.**
- You will be given a gown and paper underwear to change into.
- Please leave all cash and valuables at home. If you need to bring valuables into hospital, these can be sent to General Office for safekeeping. General Office is open between 8.30 and 4.30 Monday to Friday. Therefore, if you are discharged outside these times we will not be able to return your property until General Office is open. The Trust does not accept responsibility for items not handed in for safekeeping.
- Please bring any medication you take into hospital with you. You will be told whether you need to take your usual medication.
- Jewellery should be removed, although plain rings can be left on and covered with tape. Nail polish, false nails and body piercings must be removed.
- Again, you will be able to discuss the operation with your surgeon. You will be asked to sign a consent form to say that you understand the procedure, and what the operation involves.

What should I expect after my operation?

When you come out of theatre you will be encouraged to stay resting on a trolley or bed for two to four hours before you are discharged home. A nurse will monitor your pulse, blood pressure and wound. You will be given painkillers to control pain if needed.

If you have had a general anaesthetic or sedation, and are discharged on the day of your operation, **you must have a friend or relative to take you home and have a responsible adult to stay with you for 24 hours.**

For next 24 hours you must not

- Travel alone.
- Drive a car or ride a bicycle.
- Operate machinery (including domestic appliances such as a kettle).
- Climb ladders.
- Make important decisions or sign any business or legal documents.
- Drink alcohol.
- Return to work within 12 hours of treatment. Your general health and any medicines you are taking may increase the time you need off work.

You should

- Take it easy for the rest of the day and avoid strenuous activity.
- Take your medications as usual.
- Let someone else care for anyone you usually look after, such as children or elderly or sick relatives.

Pain relief and medication

The nursing staff will advise you about painkillers before you leave the hospital. Please tell the nurses what painkilling tablets you have at home. If these painkillers do not control your pain, your Family doctor (GP) may be able to give you stronger painkillers.

Your wound

Your wound area should be kept clean and dry for the next 48 hours. The type of stitches will be explained to you by nursing staff who will also arrange for their removal if this is necessary. If needed, your GP Practice Nurse will check your wound after discharge home. During the healing of your wound, you may experience numbness, tingling or itching. This is nothing to worry about, as these symptoms are all part of the healing process. If you have any severe swelling, discharge or bruising please contact your family doctor (GP).

Getting back to normal

It is normal to feel more tired than usual for a few weeks after having an operation. This will pass. We recommend that you do not lift or drag anything for three months after your surgery.

You may have some difficulty opening your bowels for two to three days after your operation. Drink plenty of non-alcoholic drinks and eat plenty of fruit and vegetables to avoid constipation. Gentle exercise can also help but avoid any strain.

Driving

Do not start driving until you are able to do an emergency stop without any discomfort. This is usually about two to four weeks after your surgery.

Returning to work

The amount of time you need off work will depend on your job. If you need a medical certificate (fit note), please speak to your nurse. You can self-certify for the first seven days of sickness, if this is all the time off you need.

Further Appointment

It is very unusual to have any problems after a hernia operation. Therefore there is no need for a routine follow-up outpatient appointment. If you have any problems please contact your GP.

Further Information

If you have any queries or worries following your hernia repair, please contact your GP or the ward where you had your surgery.

**Author: Surgical Division Royal Liverpool Hospital
and Broadgreen Hospital**
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All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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