

Open Inguinal Hernia Repair (male)

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This fact sheet is for general information about this procedure only. It is not intended to be used as medical advice or to replace advice that your relevant healthcare professional would give you. If you have a particular medical problem, please consult a healthcare professional.

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What is an inguinal hernia?

An inguinal hernia is a common type of hernia, causing a lump and sometimes pain in your groin.

What are the benefits?

Surgery should repair the hernia and prevent the serious complications that a hernia can cause, allowing you to return to normal activities.

Are there any alternatives?

You can sometimes control the hernia with a truss (padded support belt) or simply leave it alone. It will not get better without surgery.

What will happen if I decide not to have the procedure or the procedure is delayed?

Sometimes, the hernia can get larger with time.

Symptoms that suggest you may have a strangulated hernia include the following:

- Severe pain.
- A hernia that will not disappear when you lie down.
- Vomiting.

If you have any of these symptoms you must call your healthcare team immediately as you may need an urgent procedure.

What does the procedure involve?

Various anaesthetic techniques are possible.

The procedure usually takes about 45 minutes.

Your surgeon will make a cut on your groin and remove the 'hernial sac'. They will strengthen the muscle layer with stitches, usually inserting a synthetic mesh to cover the weak spot, and close your skin.

How can I prepare myself for the procedure?

If you smoke, stopping smoking now may reduce your risk of developing complications and will improve your long-term health.

Try to maintain a healthy weight. You have a higher risk of developing complications if you are overweight.

Regular exercise should help you prepare for the procedure, help you recover and improve your long-term health. Do not do exercises that involve heavy lifting or make your hernia painful. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

Speak to the healthcare team about any vaccinations you may need to reduce your risk of serious illness while you recover. When you come into hospital, practise hand washing and wear a face covering when asked.

What complications can happen?

Possible complications of this procedure are shown below. Some may be serious and can even be life threatening.

General complications of any procedure

- Bleeding
- Infection of the surgical site (wound)
- Allergic reaction to the equipment, materials or medication
- Blood clot in your leg
- Blood clot in your lung
- Chest infection

Specific complications of this procedure

- Developing a collection of blood (haematoma) or fluid (seroma)
- Difficulty passing urine
- Injury to structures that come from your abdomen and are within the hernia
- Temporary weakness of your leg
- Continued discomfort or pain in your groin
- Damage to nerves
- Damage to the blood supply of your testicle

Consequences of this procedure

- Pain
- Scarring of your skin



An inguinal hernia

What happens after the procedure?

You should be able to go home the same day.

Increase how much you walk around over the first few days.

You should be able to return to work after 2 to 4 weeks, depending on how much surgery you need and your type of work. Do not lift anything heavy for at least 6 weeks.

Regular exercise should help you to return to normal activities as soon as possible. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

Most men make a full recovery and can return to normal activities.

However, the hernia can come back.

Summary

An inguinal hernia is a common condition caused by a weakness in your abdominal wall, near the inguinal canal. If left untreated, an inguinal hernia can cause serious complications.

Keep this information document. Use it to help you if you need to talk to the healthcare team.

Some information, such as risk and complication statistics, is taken from global studies and/or databases. Please ask your surgeon or doctor for more information about the risks that are specific to you, and they may be able to tell you about any other suitable treatments options.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant healthcare team would give you.

Acknowledgements

Reviewer

Simon Parsons (DM, FRCS)

Illustrator

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