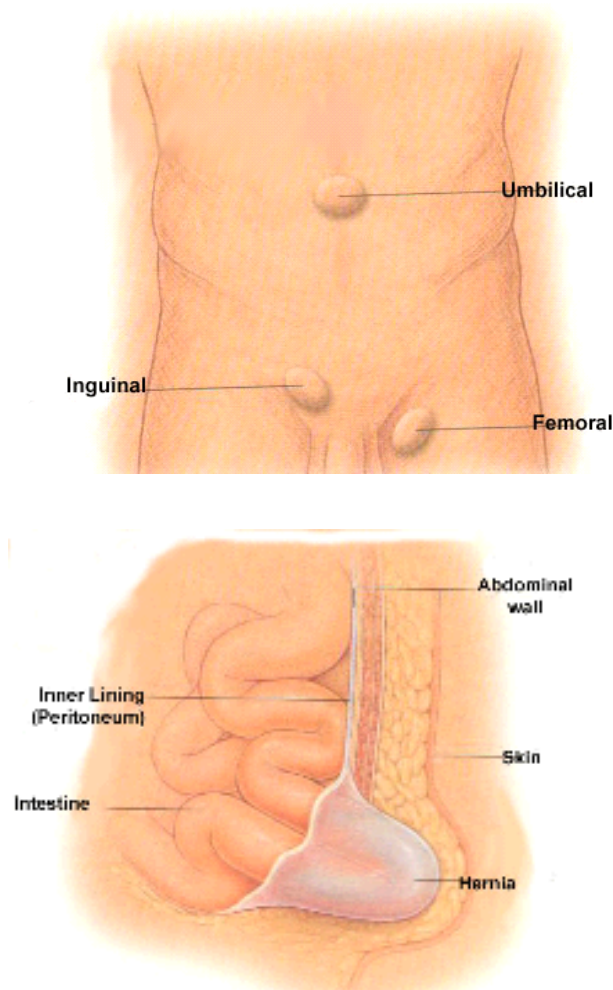


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INGUINAL HERNIA REPAIR

General Hernia Information



Hernia repair is the surgical correction of a hernia. A hernia occurs when a small sac containing tissue protrudes through a tear, weakening or separation in the muscles in the abdominal wall. Any part of the abdominal wall can develop a hernia. However, the most common site is the groin. A hernia in the groin is called an *inguinal* hernia. Inguinal hernias account for 80 percent of all hernias. In an inguinal hernia, the sac protrudes into the

groin and sometimes into the scrotum. Although inguinal hernias are most common in men, they can also occur in women. Obesity, pregnancy, coughing, heavy lifting, and straining to pass stool are associated with the appearance of an inguinal hernia. *Femoral* hernias occur just below the groin and are more common in women than in men. They are usually the result of pregnancy and childbirth. Another type of hernia develops through the navel and is called an *umbilical* hernia. A hernia that pushes through past a surgical incision or operation site is called an *incisional* hernia. A hernia that can be pushed back into place is called *reducible*. A hernia that cannot be pushed back and becomes entrapped is called *irreducible* or *incarcerated*. If an irreducible hernia becomes so entrapped that the blood supply is cut off it is called a *strangulated* hernia. This requires emergency surgery.

INGUINAL HERNIA REPAIR

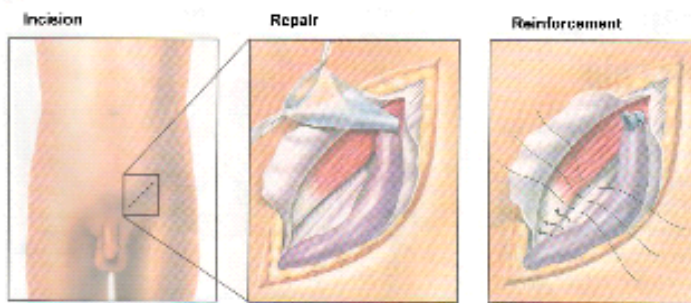
Definition

An inguinal hernia occurs in the groin (the area between the abdomen and the thigh). It is called “inguinal” because the intestines push through a weak spot in the inguinal canal, which is a triangle-shaped opening between layers of abdominal muscle near the groin. The symptoms of inguinal hernias vary. Sometimes the onset is gradual, with no symptoms other than the development of a bulge. Other times, the hernia will occur suddenly with a feeling that something has “given way.” This feeling can be accompanied by pain or discomfort. Signs and symptoms of inguinal hernia can include:

- Visible bulges in the scrotum, groin, or abdominal wall
- A feeling of weakness or pressure in the groin
- A burning feeling at the bulge
- A gurgling feeling

- Aching, pain or discomfort

Treatment



Unless the hernia is strangulated, hernia repair typically is an elective operation called a *herniorrhaphy*. An incision is usually made over the site of the hernia. The hernia sac is lifted and opened, and the protruding tissue is returned to the abdominal cavity. The excess sac is tied off and removed. The weakened area is reinforced by sewing strong surrounding muscle over the defect or by inserting a piece of mesh to cover the area of the abdominal wall defect.

Unless there is cause for concern, hernia repair can be done on an outpatient basis. Only you can decide whether you ought to proceed with the repair. However, you must realize that (1) the hernia is not going to heal by itself and (2) pain may increase in the area of the hernia, and it will usually increase in size over time.

Day of Surgery

On the day of your surgery, you should wear loose-fitting, simple clothing to the hospital, such as a sweat suit and slip-on shoes. Unless otherwise instructed don't eat or drink anything after midnight the evening before surgery. Your surgery will last 1-2 hours and you will then be taken to a recovery area. Usually you will be discharged as soon as you are able to eat, drink, urinate, and walk around. You should have a friend or relative drive you home after discharge and, ideally, someone should stay

with you the first night, particularly if your bedroom is on the second floor of your house because stair climbing will be difficult.

Home Care

You will be given a prescription for pain medication to be taken as directed. **DO NOT DRIVE** when taking the pain medication. You may eat as you did before the operation but avoid becoming constipated. You may shower the day after surgery and pat the incision dry. Allow the narrow strips of tape to fall off with time or we will remove them at your follow-up visit. Begin easy activities, such as walking, as soon as comfortable, but avoid lifting over five pounds. During your follow-up visit let's discuss lifting and increasing activity. You may resume sexual activity as soon as you are comfortable.

You may experience bruising, testicular or groin swelling, numbness at or around the incision site, and pain. An ice bag may be used for short periods of time to reduce swelling. A hard ridge will form along the incision line. With time, this ridge will soften and become less noticeable.

When to Call Us

- The incision becomes red, hot, or if it drains colored fluid
- You develop a temperature higher than 101 degrees
- Your scrotum swells
- You are unable to urinate
- You develop any unusual signs or symptoms
- You have any questions

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