
Hernia Repair Surgery

A hernia is a weakness or defect in the wall of the belly (abdomen). This causes an internal organ to stick out (protrude) through the wall of muscle or tissue that normally holds it in place. A hernia won't heal on its own. Surgery is needed to fix the defect in the abdominal wall. If not treated, a hernia can get larger. In rare cases, it can also lead to serious health complications. Fortunately hernia surgery can be done quickly and safely. Below is an overview of hernia repair surgery.

Getting ready for surgery

Your healthcare provider will talk with you about getting ready for surgery. Follow all the instructions you're given and be sure to:

- Tell your healthcare provider about any medicines, supplements, vitamins, or herbs you take. This includes both prescription and over-the-counter medicines. Ask if you should stop taking any of them.
- In general, stop taking aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen, and other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) 3 days before surgery. But if you take aspirin, or other antiplatelet medicines, for a heart condition or a past stroke, talk with your providers before stopping.
- Arrange for an adult family member or friend to give you a ride home after surgery.
- Stop smoking. Smoking affects blood flow and can slow healing. Smoking can make you more likely to have complications from anesthesia and the surgery.
- Gently wash the surgical area the night before surgery. You may be given a special scrub to use.
- Follow any directions you're given for not eating or drinking before surgery.

The day of surgery

Arrive at the hospital or surgical center at your scheduled time. You'll be asked to change into a patient gown. You'll then be given an IV (intravenous) line for fluids and medicine. Shortly before surgery, an anesthesiologist or nurse anesthetist will talk with you. They'll explain the types of anesthesia used to prevent pain during surgery. You'll have 1 or more of the following:

- Monitored sedation to make you relaxed and sleepy.
- Local anesthesia to numb the surgical site.
- Regional anesthesia to numb certain areas of your body.
- General anesthesia to let you sleep during surgery.

Fixing the weakness

Surgery treats a hernia by repairing the weakness in the abdominal wall. Most hernias are treated using tension-free repairs. This is surgery that uses special mesh materials to repair

the weak area. The mesh covers the weak area like a patch. The mesh is made of strong, flexible plastic that stays in the body. Over time, nearby tissues grow into the mesh to strengthen the repair.

After surgery

When the procedure is over, you'll be taken to the PACU (post anesthesia care unit) to be watched. Your blood pressure, breathing, and heart rate will be monitored. You'll also have some type of bandage over the surgical site. To help reduce discomfort, you'll be given pain medicines as needed. You may also be given breathing exercises to keep your lungs clear. Later you'll be asked to get up and walk. This helps prevent blood clots in the legs. You can go home when your healthcare provider says you're ready.

Risks and possible complications of hernia surgery

- Bleeding
- Infection
- Numbness or pain in the groin or leg
- Risk the hernia will recur
- Damage to the testicles or testicular function
- Anesthesia risks
- Mesh complications
- Inability to pee
- Bowel or bladder injury