



Patient & Family Guide

2025

After Hernia Surgery

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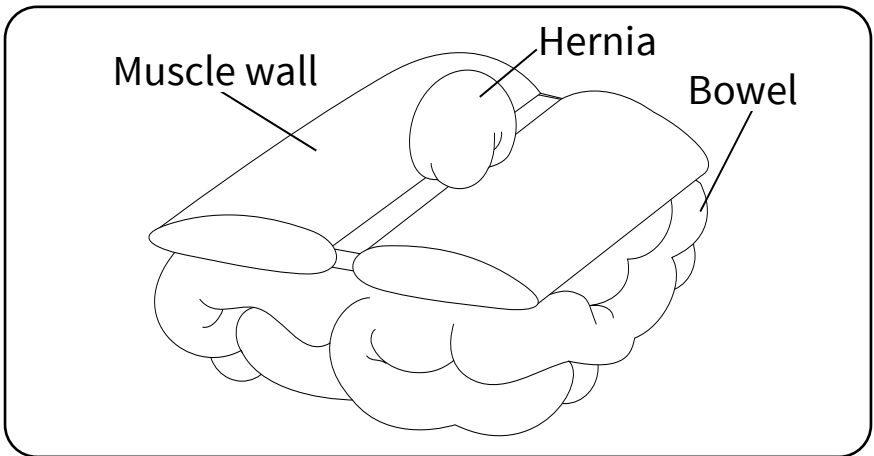


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After Hernia Surgery

Tissue and organs of the body are held in place by a sturdy outside wall of muscle and tissue.

If this wall tears or breaks open, tissue and organs (like part of your bowel) can push through the opening. This is called a hernia.



Types of hernias

Inguinal hernia

- This is the most common type of hernia. It is usually caused by a weakness in the wall at birth.

Femoral hernia

- This hernia is in the thigh, just below the groin.

Umbilical hernia

- This hernia happens when there is a tear close to your belly button, causing a bulge.

Incisional hernia

- This hernia can happen in an area where the abdominal (stomach area) wall was weakened by surgery.

How is a hernia repaired?

- The surgeon will put the tissue or organ back in place inside the muscle wall. They will then sew strong tissues over the problem area. If there are not enough natural tissues, they will use a synthetic (man-made) patch.

Incision (cut) care at home

- You may feel more comfortable in loose clothes.

If you have a scrotum, it is common to have swelling and/or bruising. Over time, this will go away on its own.

You can use a soft, gel ice pack or a bag of frozen vegetables wrapped in a towel to help lower swelling and bruising.

- You may have stitches. If you do, they will be removed about 7 to 10 days after your surgery. You will have an appointment with your surgeon to remove your stitches. If you do not have an appointment with your surgeon, you may need to make an appointment with your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner).
- If you have Steri-Strips™ (strong pieces of tape) over your incision, you can peel them off as they get loose. This will be about 7 to 10 days after your surgery.
- Your surgeon will tell you when you can remove the dressing over your incision and when it is safe to shower. This is usually after 48 hours (2 days).
- Once your surgeon says it is OK to shower, put plastic wrap (like Saran™ Wrap) over your dressing so that your incision does not get wet.
- You may get Steri-Strips™ wet. Pat them dry after showering. **Do not** rub them.
- You can bathe when your incision is healed. This is usually about 10 days after your surgery.

If you have bleeding through your dressing:

- Sit or lie down.
- Use your hand or a clean cloth to put steady pressure over the dressing for 20 to 30 minutes.

If the bleeding does not stop, call your surgeon. If you cannot reach them, go to your nearest Emergency Department right away.

Activity

- For the first few days at home, you will get tired easily and may need extra rest.
- You can do more activity over time as your energy comes back. Start by doing light housework, making small meals, walking, and riding as a passenger in a car for a short distance.

For 6 weeks after your surgery, do not:

- › Vacuum
- › Strain (like when having a bowel movement [poop])
- › Lift heavy objects over 5 pounds, including children
- › Do strenuous (hard) activities, including sports

- Talk with your surgeon about what activities are right for you.
- **For 7 days (1 week) after your surgery, do not drive unless your surgeon says it is OK.** It will take time for your concentration and reflexes to go back to normal.
- When you can go back to work will depend on:
 - › the type of work you do.
 - › your overall health.
 - › your recovery.
- You may have sex whenever you feel well enough.

Pain and discomfort

- Take pain medication as prescribed by your surgeon.
- **Do not drive if you are taking pain medication.**
- **Do not drink alcohol while taking pain medication.**



- If you had laparoscopic surgery (surgery done with a scope), you may have discomfort in your shoulder and neck. This is common. It may be caused by the gas placed in your abdomen (stomach) during surgery. This usually goes away in 24 to 48 hours (1 to 2 days). It may help to use a warm pack or pain medication, and to move.

Eating and drinking

- Eat and drink small amounts until you feel well enough to go back to your usual eating. Eating well-balanced, healthy meals will help you to get your strength back.
- The foods you eat affect your bowel movements. To prevent constipation (not being able to poop), eat foods high in fibre (like bran cereal, whole-grain bread, green leafy vegetables, fresh fruit).
- Drink 8 to 10 glasses of water a day unless you have been told not to because of another health problem.
- Ask your primary health care provider about using stool softeners or laxatives, if needed. You do not have to have a bowel movement every day to be healthy.

Call your surgeon if you have:

- › Nausea (feeling sick to your stomach) and vomiting (throwing up) that lasts more than 24 hours
- › Redness, swelling, or warmth around your incision
- › Drainage from your incision
- › Separation (coming apart) of the edges of your incision
- › Pain that is not going away or is getting worse, even when taking your pain medications as prescribed
- › More pain or tenderness around your incision
- › Fever (temperature above 38 °C or 100.4 °F) or chills

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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