

HERNIA

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

WHAT IS A HERNIA?

The most common hernias, usually in men, appear in the groin. The hernia appears as a bulge caused by a weakness in the muscle wall of the abdomen. Another common type of hernia occurs around the belly button (umbilical).

WHAT CAUSES A GROIN HERNIA?

Above the groin is a small hole in the muscle wall of the abdomen where arteries and veins pass to the testicle in men or labia in women. A weakness may result in a part of the bowel bulging (inguinal or femoral hernia). You may feel discomfort when coughing, standing for long periods, or carrying out some vigorous activity.

HOW TO BE REFERRED?

Once referred by your GP, you will be asked to choose where you would like to be treated. Choose Probus Surgical Centre.

Will the hernia return

The possibility of recurrence of the hernia is small, especially if you follow your surgeon's advice about taking care of yourself after the operation.

COMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Any surgical procedure has an element of risk attached to it and occasionally things do not turn out as well as expected. Possible complications include:

- excessive bleeding and injury to nearby areas (tissue)
- infection
- allergic reaction to drugs or anaesthetic
- a recurrence of the problem.

The likelihood of complications increases in:

- people over 60 years
- people who are overweight, smokers or heavy drinkers
- people who take certain medications.

Your doctor will help you decide between the advantages and risks.

WHERE TO GET ADVICE

If you have any concerns during the post-op period you can get advice or help from one these sources.

- Try your own doctor or nurse
- Contact one of the surgical team.
Tel: 01726 885104
- Out of Hours Service – contact the emergency number provided by your surgery
- Your local MIU or Emergency Department

Severe pain, excessive swelling or bleeding should prompt you to seek advice. Insist that the dressings are removed and the wound inspected before redressing.

TRAINING OF STUDENTS

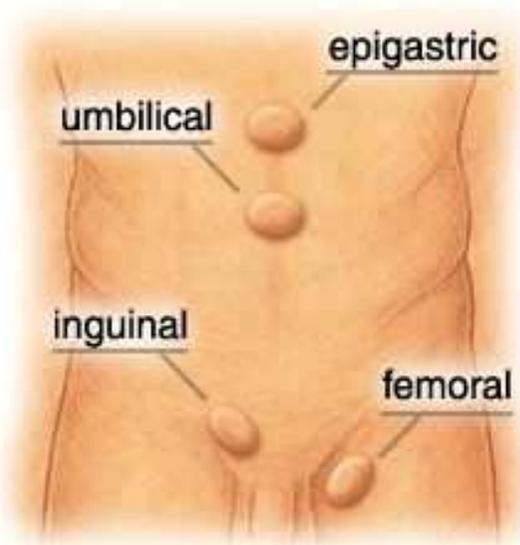
We are a teaching and training practice. Sometimes medical students or doctors in training may wish to observe or participate in procedures or operations. They will always be supervised by a senior doctor and will only participate with your approval.

If you do not wish to be seen by trainees or students you are perfectly entitled to withhold your consent.

If, after reading this information leaflet you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact the surgical team. Tel: 01726 885104

PROBUS SURGICAL CENTRE

Probus Surgical Centre is easy to get to and has ample free parking. You will have a warm friendly greeting and a service of the highest quality.



WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES?

You may at first find relief by lying down, which stops the hernia from bulging, but the only cure is an operation. The hernia is not dangerous but the discomfort will continue if not seen to. If left too long, it may become strangulated. This is when the loop of the bowel, which forms the hernia, twists on itself. Some people have hernias for years, but they have to be aware not to strain themselves which may stifle their lifestyle unnecessarily. It can be better to have the operation.

WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE?

A hernia operation can be performed under either local or general anaesthetic. The surgeon will advise what is best for you. At Probus Surgical Centre this operation is performed under local anaesthetic.

An incision is made measuring six to ten centimetres long above the groin. One of the muscle layers is opened and the hernia is then carefully put back in place and a repair is made to strengthen the weakened area. The repair can consist of two or more layers of stitches or by stitching a plastic mesh over the whole area. Both of these methods give very good lasting results. Once again the surgeon will decide what is required depending on what type of hernia he finds.

The procedure will last anywhere from 30 to 80 minutes.

If you are on blood thinning drugs such as Warfarin, please contact our surgical team for further information prior to your operation

POST-OP CARE

Removal of stitches

You will be advised about the closure of the wound as to whether you have dissolving stitches, sutures or clips that need to be removed after 4 -10 days (depending on the Surgeon's preference).

Pain control

You will be given some pain killers to take home as there may be a feeling of tightness around the stitches which may cause some discomfort. We recommend taking regularly as instructed by the nurse.

Bathing

Don't bathe or shower for 2 days after the operation. In some cases, a waterproof dressing will have been used. This will protect the wound even while washing or bathing. It is best to wait for the wound to become nice and "dry" before activities such as swimming.

Driving

It is best to wait until you are comfortable and confident. You must be confident that you can keep control during an emergency. (Check with your Insurance Company to make sure you are covered).

Work and heavy lifting

You can return to work when you feel strong enough. In case of heavy lifting, this should be avoided for at least one month after the operation or as advised by your surgeon.