

General Surgery – Hernia Repair

Guidance for Patients

In order to proceed with your operation under local anaesthetic and to reduce the risk of having to have a general anaesthetic, there are some things you can do such as:

- Have your blood pressure checked
- Have your weight checked to ensure you are within the safe BMI range for local anaesthetic surgery
- if diabetic, it is important to have good control of your blood sugar as this will reduce your risk of infections after surgery, and to have your HbA1c checked

Whilst you are waiting for your referral for a hernia assessment, it is important that you look after yourself. Please avoid any heavy lifting or strenuous activities that put further strain on your hernia (weakness in the muscle and body wall). Examples include lifting furniture, boxes, heavy objects, or strenuous gardening.

Once a hernia has developed, it will not disappear on its own. Therefore, surgery is the only method of repairing the weakened abdominal wall and returning the displaced tissues or organs back to their original position. However, surgery is not always essential if your hernia is not causing any significant discomfort or impacting your ability to perform normal day-to-day activities.

Whether you need a hernia repair or not really comes down to the extent of the issue at hand. While it may feel fine now, hernias can worsen over time, making surgery a viable option. The earlier you can have surgery, the lower your risk of potential complications will be as well. This can then improve your overall recovery time, allowing you to return to your daily life and activities sooner rather than later.

Improve Your Health and become More Active

Whether you want to lose weight, get active or quit smoking, Better Health is here with lots of free tools and support. The following link will help you get started <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health>.

Smoking and high-risk drinking (over 14 units) is likely to increase your risk of infection after surgery.

Your surgeon may have requested that you lose weight and reduce your body mass index (BMI) before you have your surgery. An ideal BMI is between 21-25. There will be local support groups, within your area, that can provide you with further information about giving up smoking, losing weight and improving you and your families' lifestyle.

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Medical Conditions

Many medical conditions can affect recovery from surgery. It is important to make sure any known conditions are controlled as well as possible ahead of your surgery.

Diabetes: Good control of your blood sugar is important to reduce your risk of infections after surgery. If above the acceptable threshold [69mmols] your surgery may be delayed until your diabetes is under better control. Think about your diet and weight and talk to your diabetes nurse or team early to see if they need to make any changes to your treatment.

Blood pressure: should be controlled to safe levels to reduce your risk of stroke. Sometimes operations may be delayed if it is too high. Have your blood pressure checked at your surgery well ahead of your operation – some GP surgeries have automated machines so you can pop in any time. If it is high, your GP can check your medications and make any changes needed ahead of the operation.

Heart, lung, and other medical problems: If you have any other long-term medical problems, consider asking your GP or nurse for a review of your medications, especially if you think your health is not as good as it could be. These are the issues that may delay your operation if something 'abnormal' is detected at your preassessment appointment.

Anxiety and mental health: To maintain good mental health, there are lots of things we can do to help ourselves.

- Get good sleep
- Spending quality time with others
- Live a healthy life; be active, balanced diet.

To learn more about how to maintain good mental health, use the link below.

<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-wellbeing-tips/top-tips-to-improveyour-mental-wellbeing>

Taking an active role in planning and preparing for your operation will help you feel in control, leave hospital sooner and get back to normal more quickly. To learn more about preparing for surgery and access the Fitter Better Sooner toolkit and animation resources use the link; rcoa.ac.uk/fitterbettersooner

What should I do if my health is deteriorating and when to get medical advice?

You should go your nearest A&E straight away if you have a hernia and you develop any of the following symptoms:

- sudden, severe pain
- being sick
- difficulty pooing or passing wind
- the hernia becomes firm or tender, or cannot be pushed back in

These symptoms could mean that either:



- the blood supply to a section of organ or tissue trapped in the hernia has become cut off (strangulation)
- a piece of bowel has entered the hernia and become blocked (obstruction). A strangulated hernia and obstructed bowel are medical emergencies and need to be treated as soon as possible.

For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it's not an emergency, please call the NHS 111 service, available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week or you can visit www.nhs.uk.

For something life threatening please dial 999.