

# Hernia Surgery

## KEY POINTS



A hernia is a muscle defect which can allow abdominal contents such as fat or bowel to “escape” through the hole to where they do not belong.

The groin is a common place for hernias to occur because of the natural weakness caused by the passage of the spermatic cord (or round ligament in the female) down to the scrotum (labia in female). Other common sites for hernias include in the belly button, upper abdomen or where previous scars are from past surgery.

Hernias tend to enlarge with time and produce symptoms such as pain, discomfort and the appearance of a lump. When body contents “escape” through the defect, there is also the risk of them getting “stuck” in the hole (incarceration). It is then possible for the contents to lose their blood supply and die, which is potentially dangerous. –This is why it is generally recommended to repair hernias when they arise.

Modern hernia surgery is usually done by incorporating synthetic mesh in the repair to minimise the chance of hernia recurrence. Many hernias can be repaired with either open or keyhole surgery, both of which are effective repairs.

### RECOVERY FROM HERNIA SURGERY

You will have discomfort or an ache related to the repair for a week or more after the surgery. Bruising and swelling are extremely common. Sometimes it feels like the hernia is still there because of this.

You can get back to most “normal” activities after 4 or 5 days guided by your comfort level. These activities include:

- driving a car
- most household activities
- walking, running, cycling
- work which is mostly sedentary
- playing bowls etc.

For strenuous activities involving core muscle activation, 4 - 6 weeks off is recommended. These activities include:

- heavy lifting e.g. 15kg or more
- similar strenuous pushing and pulling activities
- contact sports
- burst effort activities such as golf, cricket

**In all situations COMMON SENSE APPLIES**

*Below is a list of estimated complication rates associated with groin hernia surgery. Note that these rates assume a good risk patient without previous hernia repair. Groin hernias are the most common and specific issues related to these are listed in the second half of the table*

Complication	Frequency	Comment
Recurrence of Hernia	2-5%	
Swelling or bruising	50%+	More so in larger hernias
Bleeding	1-2%	
Infection	2-3%	
Injury to internal organs	<1%	
GROIN HERNIAS		
Nerve damage affecting upper leg	1-5%	If it occurs, usually a small area of numbness
Damage to spermatic cord in males	1%	May affect fertility in younger males
Testicular shrinkage	1-2%	Blood supply affected
Urinary retention	10%	Difficulty passing urine immediately post-op
Ongoing groin discomfort	5-10%	For groin hernias. May be difficult to resolve
Open surgery required	5%	

Please sign and date to indicate your understanding of the above:

Sign: \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_