

## Patient Education

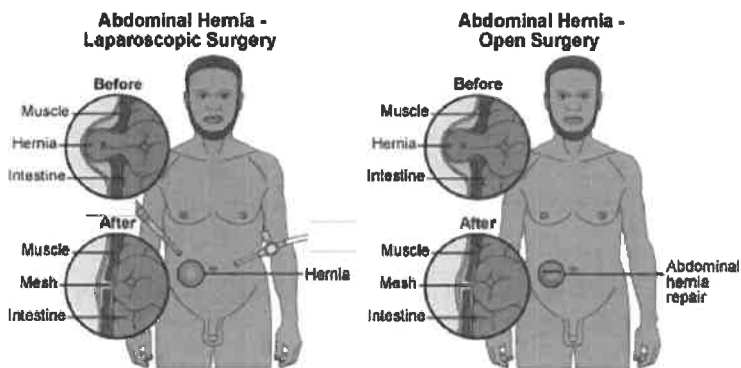
### Abdominal Hernia Repair Discharge Instructions

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You must carefully read the "Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer" below in order to understand and correctly use this information

### About this topic

The belly wall covers the center of your body. It keeps your stomach and other body organs in place. Sometimes, part of your belly wall may become weak. This weakness can cause organs to bulge or swell through the weak wall and get stuck. This is an abdominal hernia. A hernia repair surgery fixes this weakness in the wall. Then, your organs stay in place.



### What care is needed at home?

- Ask your doctor what you need to do when you go home. Make sure you ask questions if you do not understand what the doctor says. This way you will know what you need to do.
- Support your cut site when you cough or sneeze. Also be sure to avoid constipation or hard stools to prevent straining your belly. This may help lower the chance of a hernia coming back.
- Do not wear tight clothing over your cut site. Ask your doctor about wearing a binder to help keep your belly in place.
- Avoid heavy lifting and strenuous exercise.
- Talk to your doctor about how to care for your cut site. Ask your doctor about:
  - When you should change your bandages and how you should clean the site
  - When you may take a bath or shower
  - If you need to be careful with lifting, pushing, or pulling things over 10 pounds (4.5 kg)
  - When you may go back to your normal activities like work, driving, or sex
- Be sure to wash your hands before and after touching your wound or dressing.
- Use a small pillow to put pressure on your belly. This can make you more comfortable when you cough, laugh, or do other actions.
- Place an ice pack or a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a towel over the painful part. Never put ice right on the skin. Do not leave the ice on more than 10 to 15 minutes at a time.

## Wound Care



### What follow-up care is needed?

- Your doctor may ask you to make visits to the office to check on your progress. Be sure to keep these visits.
- If you have stitches or staples, you will need to have them taken out. Your doctor will often want to do this in 1 to 2 weeks. If the doctor used skin glue, the glue will fall off on its own.

### What drugs may be needed?

The doctor may order drugs to:

- Help with pain
- Fight an infection
- Soften stools

### Will physical activity be limited?

You may need to rest for a while and limit your activity. If you run, work out, or play sports, you may not be able to do those things until your doctor tells you it is okay. Talk to your doctor about walking and other activities you can do to help you get stronger and help you recover.

### What changes to diet are needed?

- Eat foods high in fiber. These include grains, bran, cereals, and fresh fruits and vegetables. Ask your doctor about changes in your diet or ask to talk with a dietitian.
- Drink 8 to 10 glasses of water each day.

### What problems could happen?

- Hernia could come back
- Bleeding
- Infection
- Scarring
- Injury to nearby organs
- Bowel blockage
- Pneumonia
- Blood clots in legs

## What can be done to prevent this health problem?

- Keep a healthy weight. Lose weight if you are overweight.
- Avoid smoking. Ask for help if you are having problems quitting.

## When do I need to call the doctor?

- Signs of infection. These include a fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, chills, pain with passing urine, wound that will not heal.
- Signs of wound infection. These include swelling, redness, warmth around the wound; too much pain when touched; yellowish, greenish, or bloody discharge; foul smell coming from the cut site; cut site opens up.

## Teach Back: Helping You Understand

The Teach Back Method helps you understand the information we are giving you. The idea is simple. After talking with the staff, tell them in your own words what you were just told. This helps to make sure the staff has covered each thing clearly. It also helps to explain things that may have been a bit confusing. Before going home, make sure you are able to do these:

- I can tell you about my surgery.
- I can tell you how to care for my cut site.
- I can tell you what I will do if I have swelling, redness, or warmth around my wound.

## Where can I learn more?

American Academy of Family Physicians

<https://familydoctor.org/condition/hernia/>

American College of Surgeons

[https://www.facs.org/~media/files/education/patient%20ed/ventral\\_hernia.ashx](https://www.facs.org/~media/files/education/patient%20ed/ventral_hernia.ashx)

American College of Surgeons

<https://www.facs.org/~media/files/education/patient%20ed/adultumbilical.ashx>

NHS Choices

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hernia/>

Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer:

This information is not specific medical advice and does not replace information you receive from your health care provider. This is only a brief summary of general information. It does NOT include all information about conditions, illnesses, injuries, tests, procedures, treatments, therapies, discharge instructions or life-style choices that may apply to you. You must talk with your health care provider for complete information about your health and treatment options. This information should not be used to decide whether or not to accept your health care provider's advice, instructions or recommendations. Only your health care provider has the knowledge and training to provide advice that is right for you.

## Last Reviewed Date

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