

Hernia Repair Surgery

Information for patients preparing for recovery

Read this brochure to learn about:

- How to take care of yourself at home
- How to cope with pain
- Problems to watch for
- When to get medical help
- When to see your doctor for a follow-up visit



You have had an anesthetic and narcotic pain medication.

- Do not drive a car or drink alcohol for 24 hours.
- Have a responsible adult stay with you overnight.



What is a hernia?

A hernia happens when part of an organ, such as the small or large bowel, bulges through a weak spot in your abdomen. The hernia will look like a balloon underneath the skin. The hernia may have been there since birth or it may have developed later in life after abdominal surgery, or because of heavy lifting, coughing or obesity.

There are several places where hernias can happen:

- inguinal hernias are in the groin area
- umbilical hernias are in the belly button area
- incisional hernias happen where you have a surgical scar

What can I eat and drink after my surgery?

For the first day have clear fluids, like apple juice, ginger ale, clear tea and broth.

The next day you can slowly go back to eating and drinking what you normally would.

If you are nauseated (have upset stomach) or vomiting, you can buy anti-nausea medication such as Gravol from your pharmacy without a prescription. Take it as directed and drink fluids until the nausea passes. Then gradually return to what you normally eat.

How much activity is safe?

Go home and rest today.

You will be walking within hours of your surgery, so keep taking short walks on the first day. You can try walking to the bathroom, kitchen or bedroom.

You should continue to feel better and return to your normal activities within 2 days.

For the next 4 to 6 weeks:

- **No strenuous activities, exercises or sports.** For example, no swimming, weight lifting, shoveling snow, golfing, gardening or jogging.
- **No heavy lifting.** For example, don't carry groceries, young children or pets.

The time you have to wait depends on your job and the type of sport.

How do I take care of my wound?

You will have an outer gauze dressing and small tapes called steri-strips underneath it.

- If you have the clear waterproof dressing, you can shower in 24 hours.
- Do NOT take a bath until your surgeon tells you it is safe to do so.
- Remove the entire dressing 7 days after your surgery. Do not put the old dressing back on.
- Place an ice pack or crushed ice in a plastic bag and wrapped in a thin towel on the wound for 15 minutes. Do not put the ice pack directly on your skin. Do this 3 or 4 times a day for the first 2 days after your surgery.
- Wear clean briefs (no boxers) for 5 to 7 days to help support your scrotum.
- Your scrotum may become swollen and bruised. This is normal and should go away.

When can I shower or bathe?

- You can shower in 24 hours. Your dressing is waterproof, so DO NOT remove it.
- After you shower, pat the wound dry with a clean towel. Do not rub the wounds.

How to cope with your pain

It is normal to have pain after this surgery. Your pain should get better every day.

We will give you a prescription for pain medication. Take the prescription to a pharmacy to have it filled. Follow the directions for taking the medication.

As you start to feel better, take less and less until you do not need any pain medication. Do not drink alcohol or drive when taking these medications since they may cause drowsiness.

When can I take my usual medications again?

If you have not taken your usual daily medication, take it as soon as you get home.

If you take Aspirin or other blood thinners, ask your surgeon when to restart it.

What if I am constipated?

Pain medication can make you constipated. To prevent constipation:

- Drink about 3 to 5 glasses of water every day (each glass should be about 8 ounces).
- Eat foods that are high in fibre such as fruits, vegetables and bran.
- If you have not had a bowel movement for 72 hours, take Milk of Magnesia as directed on the bottle. You can buy this at a pharmacy without a prescription.



Call your surgeon, family doctor or go to Toronto Western Hospital emergency department if any of these problems below happen to you. If you are from out of town, go to the nearest emergency department:

Bleeding that won't stop

- Press on the area for 30 minutes. If the bleeding does not stop and soaks the dressing, go to the nearest emergency department.

Pain and/or nausea

- Have the phone number for your pharmacy ready because the doctor may want to call the pharmacy to change your prescription.
- Vomiting that does not get better after taking Gravol or other anti-nausea medication.

Swelling

- Your stomach becomes very hard and painful.
- You see redness around your wound and/or yellowish-green pus coming from the wound.

Fever

- Your temperature goes higher than 38.5 °C or 101.5 °F.

My follow-up appointment

Call your surgeon's office to schedule a follow-up visit.

Please bring your health card (OHIP) with you to all your hospital visits.

Dr. Chadi 416 603 6769

Dr. Jackson 416 603 5599

Dr. Okrainec 416 603 5224

Dr. Penner 416 603 6220

Dr. Quereshy 416 603 5553

Other _____

Date: _____ Time: _____



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