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GS04lite Open Incisional Hernia Repair

Expires end of December 2013
Issued December 2012

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This document will give you information about an open incisional hernia repair. If you have any questions, you should ask your GP or other relevant health professional.

What is an incisional hernia?

Any operation on the abdomen needs a cut that is closed with stitches. Sometimes the wound does not heal properly, resulting in the contents of the abdomen pushing through. This produces a lump called a hernia (see figure 1).

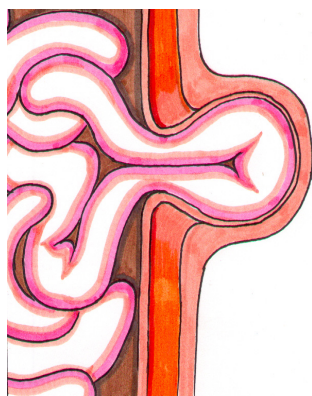


Figure 1

Hernia – bowel pushing through a weakness in the muscle wall of the abdomen

A hernia can be dangerous because the intestines or other structures within the abdomen can get trapped and have their blood supply cut off (strangulated hernia).

What are the benefits of surgery?

You should no longer have the hernia. Surgery should prevent you from having any serious complications.

Are there any alternatives to surgery?

You can sometimes control the hernia with supportive clothing or simply leave it alone. It will not go away without an operation.

What does the operation involve?

A variety of anaesthetic techniques is possible. The operation usually takes about an hour and a half.

Your surgeon will make a cut through your old scar and repair the weak tissue either with stitches or using a synthetic mesh, which is stitched to the muscles.

What complications can happen?

1 General complications

- Pain
- Infection of the surgical site (wound)
- Bleeding
- Unsightly scarring
- Blood clots

2 Specific complications

- Developing a lump under the wound
- Difficulty passing urine
- Skin necrosis
- Injury to structures within the hernia
- Injury to nerves
- Removing the umbilicus (belly button)

How soon will I recover?

You should be able to go home after one to four days.

You should increase how much you walk around over the first few days after your operation.

Your doctor will tell you when you can return to work depending on the extent of surgery and your type of work.

Regular exercise should help you to return to normal activities as soon as possible. Before you start exercising, you should ask a member of the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

The hernia can come back.

Summary

An incisional hernia is a weakness in the abdominal wall which happens when previous wounds do not heal properly. If left untreated, an incisional hernia can cause serious complications.

Acknowledgements

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Illustrations: Hannah Ravenscroft RM

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you.