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GS11lite Open Inguinal Hernia Repair (female)

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

What is an inguinal hernia?

Weak spots can develop in the layer of muscle in the abdominal wall, resulting in the contents of the abdomen pushing through. This produces a lump called a hernia (see figure 1).

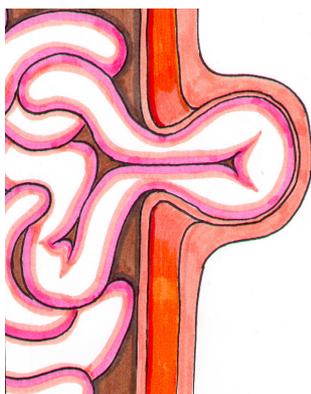


Figure 1

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

An inguinal hernia happens at the inguinal canal. This is a narrow passage in which blood vessels pass through the abdominal wall.

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 that a hernia can cause.

Are there any alternatives to an open inguinal hernia repair?

Inguinal hernias can be repaired using the laparoscopic (keyhole) technique.

You can sometimes control the hernia with a truss (padded support belt) 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 three-quarters of an hour.

Your surgeon will make a cut in your groin and remove the 'hernial sac'. They will strengthen the muscle layer with stitches and will usually insert a synthetic mesh to cover the weak spot.

What complications can happen?

1 General complications

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

2 Specific complications

- Developing a lump under the wound
- Injury to structures within the hernia
- Temporary weakness of the leg
- Persistent discomfort or pain in the groin
- Injury to nerves

How soon will I recover?

You should be able to go home the same day.

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

You should be able to return to work after two to four weeks 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 inguinal hernia is a common condition caused by a weakness in the abdominal wall, near the inguinal canal. If left untreated, an inguinal hernia can cause serious complications.

Acknowledgements

Author: Mr Simon Parsons DM FRCS (Gen. Surg.)

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