



**Phoenix**  
Health  
Solutions

## **PATIENT INFORMATION**

**General and vascular surgery**

# OPEN HERNIA REPAIR

This information sheet is designed to answer questions you may have about your operation.

## What is a hernia?

A Hernia is a bulge or weakness in the muscles which form the front of the body wall. The most common sites for these are in the Groin or around the Umbilicus (belly button). They can be caused by the body wall being weak at birth, weakened with the passing of time, and being overstrained by coughing, heavy work or sport etc. They are very common and are easily treated. If left untreated they get bigger, cause pain and can cause a blockage in the bowel.

## What does the operation consist of?

A cut is made in the skin overlying the hernia. The bulge is pushed back or cut off. The weak part is mended and strengthened, with either nylon stitches or by securing a piece of surgical mesh over the area. The cut is then closed up with either absorbable stitches or stitches/clips which need removing.

## What happens before the operation?

The operation will be explained to you by the Surgeon ask for more details if you are unsure of anything. **You will need a responsible adult to take you home after your operation.** On the day of your operation you will be seen by the surgeon who will be performing the operation. He will check that all the necessary preparations have been made. You will sign a consent form. You will need to shave the area to be operated on. The nurse will advise and assist you with this. Your operation site will also be marked with a pen.

## Antiembotic stockings

You may be asked to wear elastic stockings to prevent any blood clots (thrombosis) you may also be given a small injection of an anti-coagulant as a further prevention.

## Periods

Your periods do not affect the operation.

## Pre-operative medication

You may be given a suppository or tablets one hour prior to your operation. This can prevent post-operative nausea or pain.



### **Transfer to theatre**

You will be taken to the operating theatre suite by the nurse. You will be wearing a cotton gown, you will need a dressing gown and slippers. Weddings rings will be fastened with tape. Removable dentures will be kept in a safe place. There will be several checks on your details.  
**The operation is then performed**

### **Will it hurt?**

There may be discomfort. You will be given injections or tablets to control this as required. Please ask for more if the pain is still unpleasant.

### **Drinking and eating**

You will be able to drink as soon as you are able following the operation .

### **Passing urine**

You must pass urine and empty your bladder within 12 hours following surgery. If you are unable to prior to discharge you may still be allowed home but should contact the surgery or the hospital if you are still unable to go after a 12 hour period.

### **Opening your bowels**

It is quite normal for the bowels not to open for a day or so following surgery. If you have not opened your bowels for 2 to 3 days following your operation ask your GP for advice. A mild natural laxative such as prunes may help initially.

### **Sleeping**

You will be offered pain killers to take home and initially these will also help you sleep after you are discharged.

### **The wounds and stitches**

If clean the dressings over these will be left on for 24 hours. Your stitches may be absorbable – if so keep dry for 48 hours and then wash as normal. (NB Do not soak in a bath for long periods for the first week post operatively). If your stitches are non-absorbable they will need to be removed in 7-10 days. The nursing staff will advise about this prior to discharge. You may keep these stitches dry for 24 hours and then wash as normal.

There may be some purple bruising around the wound which spreads downwards by gravity and fades to a yellow colour after 2-3 days.

There may be some swelling of the surrounding skin which also improves after 2-3 days. Men may be advised to wear a scrotal support for a week.



## **Sick notes**

Please ask nurses to arrange these with your surgeon pre-operatively (you can self certify for the first week off work and then see your GP).

## **Following discharge**

Initially you should go to bed when you get home on the day of your operation and rest overnight. You are likely to feel tired and need rests for 2-3 days, daily for a week or more after the operation. Gradually you will improve to your normal levels of activity.

## **Lifting**

At first discomfort will prevent you lifting but after a fortnight you should have no problem lifting objects.

## **Driving**

You can do this when you can safely do an emergency stop ie 3 weeks.

## **Sexual intercourse**

You can resume sexual relations usually 2-3 weeks after, as you find comfortable. Remember the hernia operation is not a sterilisation procedure.

## **Work**

You should refrain from work for 3-4 weeks for a light job and up to 6 weeks for a heavy manual job.

## **Complications**

These are rare but should you feel unwell please contact your GP who will be sent a letter to inform him about your operation. You will also be sent home with a supply of painkillers. However aches and twinges may be felt up to a month after your operation. Occasionally there are numb patches in the skin around the wound which get better after 2-3 months.

## **General advice**

The operation should not be underestimated. You should not over exert yourself immediately after the operation. Gradually increase your exercise to your normal pattern. Virtually all patients are back doing normal duties within 1 month.



Phoenix Health Solutions Ltd  
The White Rose Surgery  
Exchange Street  
South Elmsall  
Pontefract  
West Yorkshire  
WF9 2RD

