

# Hernia repair

## Children's Ward

### Patient Information Leaflet

#### Introduction

This leaflet is for young people who are considering having an operation to repair a hernia. It gives information about what happens during and after the operation.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact a member of the Children's Ward.

#### What is a hernia?

A hernia is where something inside the body, like an organ, pushes through a weak area in the muscle which creates a bulge under the skin. They are normally in the groin (inner thigh) or belly area.

Some people have a hernia when they are born. Others get them due to an injury or because of surgery they have had before.

The operation involves strengthening the weak area to repair the hernia.

## How is the operation carried out?

It is carried out using a general anaesthetic. This means you will be asleep for the operation. The person who gives you the general anaesthetic is called an anaesthetist.

The anaesthetic is given to you through a cannula that is put into the back of your hand. A cannula is a thin, plastic tube (please see figure 1).

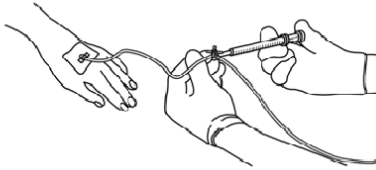


Figure 1 shows a cannula

## What are the benefits of the operation?

The hernia will be repaired. This takes away:

- Any pain that the hernia is causing.
- The risk of the hernia strangulating. This means that the blood supply to a section of organ or tissue trapped in the hernia becomes cut off. If you get this, it may mean you need an emergency operation.

## What are the risks?

As with any operation, there are some risks and it is important that we tell you about these. The risks for this operation do not happen very often. They include:

- Bleeding from the wound.
- Infection in the wound. If you get this, you may have to take antibiotics. Antibiotics are medicines that kill bacteria.
- There are some very rare risks when people have a general anaesthetic. Your anaesthetist will talk to you about these.

- After the anaesthetic, some people feel sick or are sick. You may have a headache, sore throat or feel dizzy or lightheaded but these effects should not last very long.

You can discuss the risks with your doctor.

## What are the alternatives?

You will need to discuss this with your hospital doctor as it depends on the type of hernia, if it is causing problems, or if it may cause problems in the future.

## What do I need to do before the operation?

**If you are having your operation in the morning**, you must not eat food or drink milky drinks (like hot chocolate) from midnight the night before. You can drink water or squash until 6am, on morning of your operation. After this, you must not drink (or eat) anything until after your operation.

**If you are having your operation in the afternoon**, you must not eat food or drink milky drinks (like hot chocolate) from 7am on the morning of your operation. You can drink water or squash until 10.30am that morning. After this, you must not drink (or eat) anything until after your operation.

If your operation is in the afternoon, it is a good idea to bring an overnight bag, just in case you need it. Include pyjamas, slippers, wash things, hairbrush, toothbrush and toothpaste. You should also bring any medications that you take, like inhalers.

You must bring your mum, dad or carer with you.

## What happens when I come for the operation?

You will have an appointment for the morning or the afternoon.

When you arrive at the Children's Ward, a nurse will ask you some questions and do some tests such as taking your:

- blood pressure
- heart rate
- breathing rate

The nurse will put a wrist band on each of your wrists and put cream on the backs of your hands. This cream is sometimes called magic cream. It makes the back of your hands numb so that you do not feel any pain. It is used so that when the anaesthetist puts a cannula into your hand to give you the anaesthetic, you will not feel this being put in.

The surgeon will come and see you and explain the operation to you. If you want to have the operation, the surgeon will ask you and, if you are under the age of 18, your parent or carer, to sign a consent form. This means that you are giving your permission for the surgeon to do the operation.

The anaesthetist will come and see you to check that you are well enough to have the operation.

The surgeon has a lot of operations to do and so there is a list of these. The surgeon does the operations in the order on this list.

The nurse will be able to give you a rough idea of the time you will have your operation. However, sometimes there are delays if operations take a bit longer than they thought.

If you have any questions or worries, please ask the nurse who is looking after you.

## **What happens when I go for the operation?**

A nurse will take you to the anaesthetic room to have your anaesthetic. Your mum, dad or carer (only one of them) can go with you to the anaesthetic room and stay with you until you are asleep. Nurses will be looking after you all the time that you are asleep.

## What happens after the operation?

When you wake up, you will be in a recovery room with a nurse. When the nurse is happy that you have recovered, they will take you back to the Children's Ward to your mum, dad or carer.

You may still have a cannula in your hand when you go back to the ward. This can be used to give you medicine, if you need it. For example, some people feel sick after having a general anaesthetic. If you feel sick, tell your nurse and we can give you some anti-sickness medicine. We will take the cannula out before you go home.

When you are back on the Children's Ward, the nurse will give you a drink and some food, if you want it.

## Will it hurt?

Some people have pain for a couple of days after the operation. We will give you medicine to get rid of the pain (painkillers) while you are having your operation. This is so that when you wake up, you should not feel any pain.

We will also give you painkillers regularly when you get back to the Children's Ward.

When you get home, it is a good idea to have painkillers regularly such as Calpol. You must always read the label on this medicine and not take more than it says on the label.

If the pain does not go away after a few days, please speak to your family doctor or the Children's Ward. The number of the Children's Ward is:

**01384 244271**

## When can I go home?

We hope that you will only be in hospital for the day. However, you may need to stay for one night, if your hospital doctor thinks that is a good idea. Either your mum, dad or carer can stay with you for the night.

After this time, you can go home when:

- you have eaten enough food and drink
- you are not having any bleeding
- you have had a wee
- you are not being sick
- you have a normal temperature
- your hospital doctor says you are well enough to go home

When you do go home, it is best for you to travel in a car as on public transport (buses, trains, metro), you are more likely to get an infection.

## What happens when I get home?

You will have a dressing on the wound which can be taken off 48 hours after your operation.

It is a good idea to have a bath in plain water once a day when your dressing has been removed. This helps reduce the chance of you getting an infection and keeps the area clean. Do not add anything to the bath water like salt or bubble bath.

As the wound heals, it may feel itchy, tingly, lumpy or numb and may pull slightly around the stitches. This is normal and part of the healing process.

You may have stitches which dissolve or stitches that need to be taken out. The nurse will tell you which type you have before you leave hospital.

If the stitches need to be taken out, we will give you a letter to give to the nurse at your family doctor practice. Your parent or carer can use this letter to make an appointment at your family doctor surgery to have the stitches removed. This is normally between seven to 14 days after the operation.

If you have dissolvable stitches, it is best not to soak in the bath for a long time. This will weaken the stitches which will mean your wound will take longer to heal.

You will also need to check your wound for signs of infection. These include:

- Redness
- Swelling
- Discharge – this means fluid coming out of the wound
- Very painful

Also you may have a high temperature if you have an infection. If you think you may have an infection, or if you have any bleeding, contact the Children's Ward on **01384 244271** or your family doctor. If the bleeding is very bad, you will need to get your parent or carer to take you to your nearest Emergency Department.

## **What about school and other activities?**

You will need to stay away from school until you have had your wound checked, about one week after your operation.

You should not do sports and boisterous activities for four weeks, to allow your wounds to heal.

## **Will I need to see the hospital doctor again?**

If you need to see the hospital doctor again, we will give you an appointment before you leave hospital or send you one through the post. This will normally be about two to three months after your operation.

## Can I find out more?

The NHS Choices website has more information about this type of operation:

### NHS Choices

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hernia/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Children's Ward on 01384 244271

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

### This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/paediatrics-and-neonatology/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email [patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk)

**This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.**

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此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

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Aceasta brosură poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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