

# Advice for patients after hernia repair

## Day Surgery Unit Patient Information Leaflet

### Introduction

This leaflet is for patients who have had a hernia repair. It gives advice on what you should do when you get home, and contact information for if you have any problems relating to your procedure.

### What is a hernia?

A hernia or a rupture occurs when some of the contents of the abdomen (tummy), usually gut or fat, bulge through a weakness in the abdomen wall. The bulge most commonly occurs in the groin but may be around the tummy button, or between the tummy button and the breast bone in the chest.

Weakness in the muscles in the abdominal wall may have been present since birth or may be due to previous surgery or trauma.

## How is it repaired?

Surgery is used to repair the hernia. This involves strengthening the area where the rupture has occurred. It is usually strengthened with either a mesh, or with permanent stitches, and so you will have a lump under your scar after surgery. This is normal.

The surgery can be performed using:

- a general anaesthetic, where you are asleep  
or
- a local anaesthetic, where the area is numbed using an injection and you are awake for the operation

## Pain

You may experience some degree of discomfort and soreness after your operation. Therefore, you should take the painkillers given to you when you go home (always read the label; do not exceed the recommended dose).

If you are in a lot of pain, or your painkillers do not relieve the pain, please contact your GP.

## General guidelines

### Driving

It is very important that you check with your insurance company as to when you can drive again after surgery.

You can start driving when you are able to walk up and down stairs without any pain.

You should also make sure that you can sit in your car, fasten the seatbelt, press all the pedals and turn your head without any discomfort. You should be able to do an emergency stop. This will probably take about seven days although everyone is different.

Do not drive if you have any discomfort that may distract you.

### Lifting

You should avoid any heavy lifting for four weeks. This includes heavy bags of shopping.

## Daily activities

Individuals vary so much in their recovery and expectations that it is difficult to give firm guidelines about returning to work. Your consultant will advise you on the day of surgery how long you will need to be off work.

If you need a sick note, please ask the nurse who books you in for the procedure.

For sport and sexual activities, you should be guided by your own body. As a rule of thumb, if it hurts do not do it and if it does not hurt it is OK.

Male patients are likely to develop swelling and bruising around the penis and scrotum. The bruising usually appears after about two days as purple/blue skin staining. Occasionally the testicle itself will swell, particularly if the hernia was large or had been present for a long time. For four days after your operation, wear supportive underpants, even at night.

## Wound care

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

You can remove the dressing on your wound 48 hours after your operation. At this point, you can shower as normal but please avoid perfumed products until your wound has completely healed.

Your stitches may be dissolvable. If not, they will need to be removed 10 to 14 days after surgery. When you go home, you will be given a date for when you need to have your stitches removed. Please make an appointment to see the practice nurse at your GP surgery for this.

## Recovery

Please remember that everyone recovers differently after surgery. It is quite normal to feel tired and weak for several days. However, if this persists for a long time, please contact your GP for advice.

## Follow up

If you need a follow up appointment, we will arrange this for you before you go home.

### Helpline numbers

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please speak to a member of staff or contact:

**Russells Hall Hospital Day Surgery Unit** on  
01384 456111 ext. 1886 (7.30am to 8pm, Monday to Friday)

or

**Pre-operative Assessment Unit** on  
01384 456111 ext. 1849 (7am to 7.30pm, Monday to Friday)

**Out of these hours, urgent queries:** contact Surgical Assessment Unit on 01384 456111 ext. 3359.

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

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

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/general-surgery/>

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.**

للحصول على هذه النشرة بحجم أكبر، وعلى شكل إصدار صوتي و بلغات أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال بالرقم 08000730510.

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.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta broșura 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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