

## Hernia post-operative care

A hernia occurs when an organ or fatty tissue squeezes through a weak spot or tear in surrounding muscle or connective tissue (fascia) forming a balloon like sac. This sac can be seen as a bulge under the skin when standing or exerting pressure (lifting heavy object or coughing) and usually disappears when lying flat. A hernia is caused by a combination of pressure and an opening or weakness in the muscle. Hernia's are treated by closing the muscle layer and using surgical mesh to reinforce and strengthen the area of weakness in the majority of cases.

### Activity

Take it easy! The first one to two days are the most uncomfortable. Mild discomfort and bloating from the gas is expected, along with shoulder tip pain. You may feel tired needing an afternoon nap which may last for several weeks. Increase your activity levels as you feel more comfortable with short distance walks and stairs. Participate in light activities from one to two weeks. No heavy lifting (above 5kg), strenuous activity (cycling, jogging, weight lifting) or competitive sport for six weeks. After this you may increase your activity levels gradually, as your level of comfort allows.

You may have sex after the first week only if comfortable.

### Pain

Healing pain can last for about one to two weeks, however this is individual and varies from patient to patient. For pain relief take regular Paracetamol (Panadol, Panamax) for the first few days, switching to Panadeine or Panadeine Forte for increased levels of pain, especially before bed time. You may be sent home with Palexia (Tapentadol) slow release (SR) or immediate release (IR) or Endone. Please take these as prescribed and be aware that they may constipate you (including the codeine in Panadeine and Panadeine Forte). These drugs can also make you drowsy. Please do not drive if you are taking the stronger pain medication. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (Ibuprofen (Nurofen), Mobic) can also be taken with Panadol if the discomfort is still troublesome.

Apply an ice pack to the incision site/operative site while awake, using a cloth between your skin and the ice pack. Leave on for 30 minutes, then off for 30 minutes. Continue with the ice pack for the first 48 hours if provides relief.

If you need ongoing strong pain relief and your supply from hospital has run out, please call our rooms between 9am-5pm Monday to Friday and discuss this with the practice nurse or surgeon. Prescriptions can only be provided if the surgeon is available.

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## Wounds

You are able to shower within 12 hours after your surgery, avoid deodorant soaps and do not use lotions near the wounds. The dressings are waterproof and will resist water from the shower. Pat the dressings dry with a towel and avoid rubbing the wounds. Please keep the waterproof dressings in place for two weeks, replacing them if they loosen or peel off. There are usually steri-strips underneath the waterproof dressing, leave these in place when replacing the waterproof dressing. No baths, spa's, sauna, swimming pools or swimming in the sea for three to four weeks after the surgery, until the wounds are well healed to avoid infections.

Your wounds are closed with buried, dissolving sutures and external steri-strips. You will not need to have any stitches removed.

You may notice a bulge where the hernia was. This is fluid from the repaired hernia and will resolve with time.

Depending on where the hernia was, you may notice bruising around the genitals after a day or two. Your scrotum may turn black and blue. This usually settles spontaneously. Male patients may experience mild testicular discomfort or a heaviness into their groin and/or scrotum. You may want to wear tighter underwear, like male fitness compression tights or double undies for the first week.

You may be discharged from hospital with a binder in place, which is a compression garment supporting your abdomen. Please leave this on all day and all night for the first two weeks, only removing for a shower. After the first two weeks, you can sleep without the binder and wear it during the day for the next two weeks.

## Bowels

Avoid getting constipated and straining when opening your bowels. Be proactive in taking aperients morning and/or night (Movicol, Coloxyl with senna, Metamucil) before your bowels become a problem.

## Work & Driving

You have had a general anaesthetic, therefore avoid alcohol, operating machinery and making personal or business decisions for the first 48 hours. Return to work after one to two weeks, and longer if your work involves manual labour.

No driving for ten days, and only when you are no longer taking strong pain relief which may make you drowsy and less attentive to traffic conditions, and when comfortable to do an emergency stop, and moving your foot from the brake to the accelerator safely.

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## Clot prevention

Wear compression tights if supplied by the hospital for one to two weeks, until fully mobile.

Keep doing deep breathing exercises, leg exercises, and frequent little walks to keep the blood pumping in your legs. If you notice any discomfort, pain, swelling in your calves and lower legs, or you notice you are short of breath or have chest pain, please present to your GP ASAP, or return to your nearest emergency department.

No flying is recommended for three weeks post operatively. After this, it may be recommended to take aspirin from 24 hours pre-flight and wear compression stockings if flying close to this period. Please discuss with Dr Vasica.

If you take anticoagulants (warfarin, aspirin, xarelto, apixaban etc), please confirm when you are to resume these.

## Problems

Please contact us immediately or present to your GP if you experience:

Pain that is not relieved by pain relief medications provided

Chills and persistent fevers > 38C

Worsening nausea and/or vomiting

Bleeding that will not stop

Difficulty passing urine

Unable to pass stools or gas

Increased swelling or pain in abdomen

Increasing redness or warmth around your incisions or any discharge from your incision

Yellowness of your skin

Itchiness, signs of a reaction to medication

If you think that there may be something wrong or you are worried, please do not hesitate to call

If serious, and/or after hours, please present to your nearest emergency department

## Follow up appointment

Our clinic nurse will see you at approximately two weeks after surgery unless otherwise specified.

**Please contact the office on 9997 7346 to make this appointment.**

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