

---

## Hernia surgery

**By editor**

Published: 05/26/2008 - 09:00

An inguinal hernia is a lump in the groin that occurs when part of the intestine pushes through a weakness in the muscles of the abdominal wall.

Inguinal hernias are most common in boys and men. They may be present at birth or develop later in life, when straining, heavy lifting, coughing or obesity increases the pressure within the abdomen, applying strain on the muscles in the groin area.

A hernia results from the weakening of the abdominal wall. This weakening allows the contents of the abdomen to protrude from the normal boundaries.

Hernias are repaired by implanting a sterile surgical mesh to strengthen the weakened abdominal wall.

If your surgery is performed laparoscopically, your surgeon will make three to four small incisions. Your surgeon will insert tube-like instruments through these incisions. The abdomen will be filled with gas to aid the surgeon in viewing the abdominal cavity. A camera, inserted through one of the tubes, will display images on a monitor located in the operating room.

Other instruments will be placed through the additional tubes. In this manner, your surgeon will be able to work inside your abdomen without using a larger incision.

If the procedure cannot be performed laparoscopically, your surgeon will perform an open hernia repair. In an open hernia repair, your surgeon will make one larger incision to open the abdominal cavity and repair the hernia from this incision.

Once inside, your surgeon will suture a surgical mesh to strengthen the weakened muscle. The surgical mesh is made of a strong, sterile, synthetic material. When repairing a large abdominal hernia, your surgeon may insert a drain in the abdomen that will help to prevent postoperative fluid collection in the abdomen.

A hernia repair is usually carried out as a day case, with no overnight stay in hospital. The aim of a hernia repair operation is to push the intestine back in place and strengthen the abdominal wall.

There are two main types of inguinal hernia repair - open and keyhole (laparoscopic). In most cases, the operation is an open repair, which involves a small cut in the groin. Sometimes, when there are hernias on both sides of the groin, or the hernia is a recurrence keyhole surgery is recommended.

The open procedure can be done using an "inguinal block", which involves an injection of local anaesthetic to completely block feeling from the groin area. You will stay awake during the operation. Alternatively a general anaesthetic may be used. This means you will be asleep during the operation.