

# Open repair of Inguinal Hernia

Day Surgery Unit

Surgical Short Stay Unit



Patient information leaflet

## **What is an Inguinal Hernia?**

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A hernia is a defect in the abdominal wall (stomach muscles). When there is increased pressure in the abdomen i.e. when coughing, lifting or straining, some of the bowel can be forced through the defect, causing a lump to appear.

The defect can be something you're born with, but it is often caused by frequent strains on the abdomen e.g. a physical job.

## **What is an open hernia repair?**

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This procedure involves a cut in the groin above the hernia. The defect is repaired and often reinforced with a mesh. The wound is closed with stitches or staples.

This procedure can be performed under a local or general anaesthetic. You should discuss with your surgeon which option would be most appropriate for you.

## **What are the potential risks and side effects?**

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Inguinal hernia repairs are generally very safe. However there is a small risk of excessive bruising or swelling around the operation site. This may necessitate readmission to hospital for treatment.

Rarely, the body may react to the mesh used to reinforce the hernia repair, leading to a collection of fluid around the site. This problem usually resolves itself over time.

A small number of patients experience difficulty in passing urine after surgery. The nursing staff will ask you to go to the toilet before leaving the unit to minimise the risk of problems once you get home. In men, there is a small risk of shrinking of the testicle.

## **Are there any alternative procedures?**

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People with small inguinal hernias may go on for some time without having surgery. Some wear a truss to prevent bowel from protruding. However, this is a temporary measure.

## **What are the consequences of not having the procedure?**

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Your hernia may grow larger over the years, causing more pain and discomfort. There is also the risk that protruding bowel may twist or become blocked, which is very serious. A surgical repair is the only way of getting rid of the hernia.

## **Will the procedure be painful during and after?**

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The surgeons will inject local anaesthetic around the operation site during the procedure so you should feel very little discomfort initially. However, once the local anaesthetic wears off, you will need to take painkillers for a few days to keep yourself comfortable. You will be provided with suitable painkillers before you leave the unit.

## **How do I care for the wound?**

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Keep your wound covered, clean and dry for about a week following surgery. You may replace the dressing with a clean one if required.

## **Washing**

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After a week you may bath/shower as normal. Ensure that the wound area is properly dried after bathing.

## Mobility and exercise

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Rest at home following your discharge from the unit. The following day, you should get out of bed and take some gentle exercise as comfort allows.

Avoid strenuous exercise, including gardening and sport, for the next four to six weeks.

## Driving

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Do not drive for at least 24 hours following your anaesthetic. You may drive when you can perform an emergency stop comfortably and safely, this may take one to two weeks.

## Work

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We strongly advise that you take four to six weeks off for manual work and two to four weeks for non-manual work. The Day Surgery Unit staff can provide you with a doctor's certificate for time off work if required.

## Sexual intercourse

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You may resume sexual relations when you have healed and feel comfortable and able.

## Lifting and handling

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Please avoid heavy lifting and carrying objects that are heavier than two pounds/1kg for the next four weeks. This includes household cleaning, carrying shopping and heavy gardening.

Where lifting is unavoidable (small children etc.) bend your knees and not your back. Keep your feet shoulder-width apart to keep you stable. Carry the object against your body. Bend at the knees to put the object down.

## **Will I need a follow-up appointment?**

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An outpatients appointment will be forwarded to you through the post.

## **Reference source**

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- [www.nhs.uk/conditions/inguinalherniarepair/pages/treatment.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/inguinalherniarepair/pages/treatment.aspx)





## Contact details

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If you require further advice, please do not hesitate to contact us.

### Day Surgery Unit

**Telephone:** 01483 406783 (Monday–Friday, 8am–6pm)

### Surgical Short Stay Unit

**Telephone:** 01483 406828 (Monday–Friday, 8am–6pm)

### Out of hours advice

Call 111 (formerly NHS Direct)

[www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

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## PALS and Advocacy contact details

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Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

**Telephone:** 01483 402757

**Email:** [rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net)

**Opening hours:** 9.00am–3.00pm, Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

Past review date: January 2018

Future review date: January 2021

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**PIN180110–1438**

