

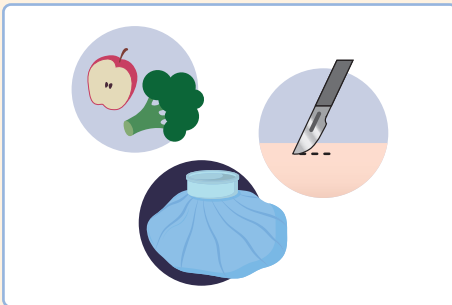
Making a decision about an inguinal hernia

This leaflet is about **inguinal hernia**.

It is split into sections. You do not have to read it all at the same time. Read it with your carer or doctor or nurse or someone you trust.



It will help you decide about **treatment**.



There are different things you can do if you have an inguinal hernia.

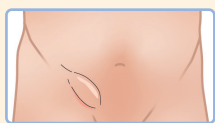


You can make a decision yourself about treatment.



Or you can make a decision with your carer or doctor or nurse.

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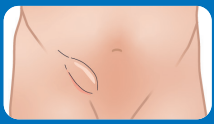
Deciding whether to have an operation

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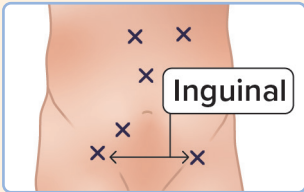


Word list, more information
and support links

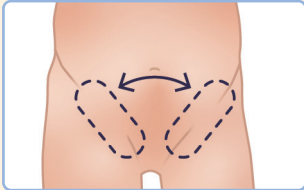
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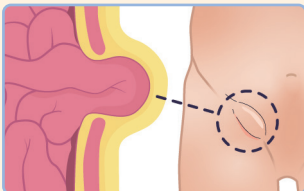
What is a hernia and how did I get it?



There are different kinds of hernia depending on where they are in the body.



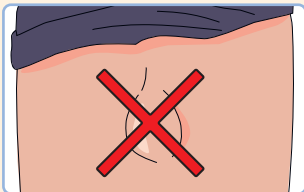
An inguinal hernia is when it happens where the leg starts. This is your groin.



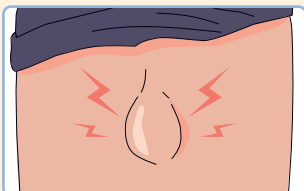
A hernia is when something from inside your body such as your intestines (gut) pushes through a weak spot in a muscle.



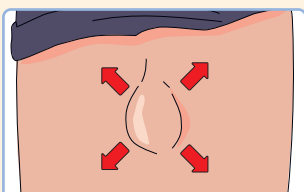
You can usually push it back in with your hand but it may pop out again.



A hernia will not go away on its own.



It might hurt or be uncomfortable.



It might get bigger.



Hernias can be uncomfortable

It might not be too bad for you.



Hernias can be painful or ache

If you have pain and your skin becomes red or hot see your doctor.

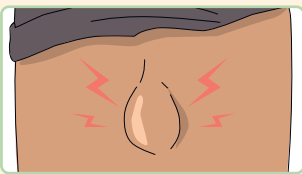


Hernias can sometimes be serious

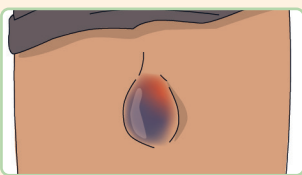
If you have a hernia and any of the symptoms listed below, go to A&E or call 111 and tell them you have a hernia.

This happens to about 2 in every 100 people.

You should look for these things:



sudden extreme pain.



if the hernia turns red or purple or dark.



if you have a hernia and are sick (vomit) or feel sick.



if you have a hernia and cannot do a poo.

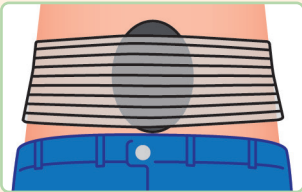


if you have a hernia and have blood in your poo (it is very dark).



If your hernia does not make you uncomfortable or cause you pain, you should not do anything.

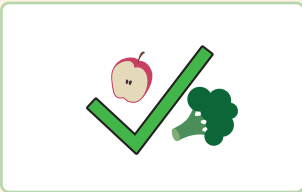
If your hernia causes you some pain or discomfort there are things you can do yourself



1. A hernia belt or truss. This is a special bandage that goes around your waist to hold a hernia in. Talk to your doctor if you want to try one.



2. Lying down and relaxing can help.



3. If you are constipated (find it difficult to poo), it can make your hernia hurt. Eat more fruits and vegetables to help with constipation.



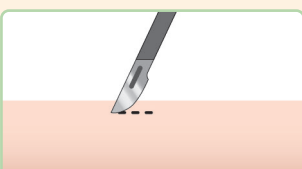
4. Keep active, walking, exercising. Be a healthy weight. Your doctor or nurse can help with this.



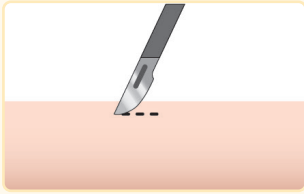
5. Some people find ice packs, hot water bottles or cold sprays can help.



If your pain is really bad, your doctor might send you to the hospital to see a specialist. A specialist is a doctor who knows more about hernias.

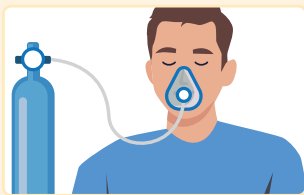


The doctor at the hospital can offer an operation.

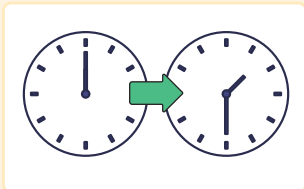


This section (pages 4 – 5) explains about an operation to fix your hernia.

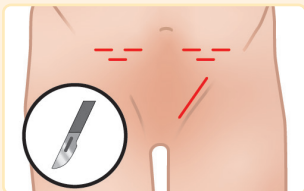
You do not have to have an operation. It is your choice. You can say yes or no. You can change your mind and choose an operation later.



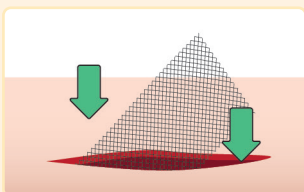
You will be given some medicine so you do not feel any pain during the operation. You will usually be asleep.



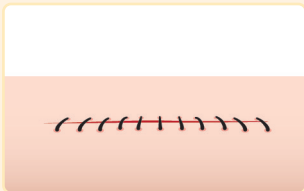
The operation takes 30 – 90 minutes.



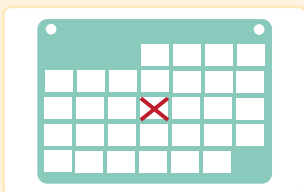
Your surgeon either makes one cut in your groin or 3 or 4 smaller cuts in your stomach (abdomen).



They push the hernia back in. They fix the hole with a mesh. Like a patch.



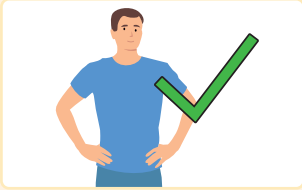
The cuts are closed with stitches or glue or staples.



You can usually go home on the same day as the operation.



What happens after an operation to fix my hernia?



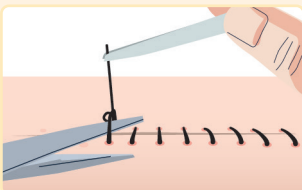
You should be able to walk around and get dressed on your own.



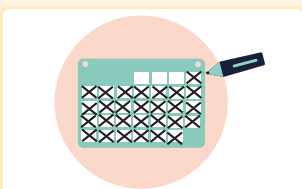
You cannot have a bath for 2 weeks.



You should not lift anything heavy like a full shopping bag, until the wound has healed.



You might need to go back to hospital to have your stitches or staples taken out.

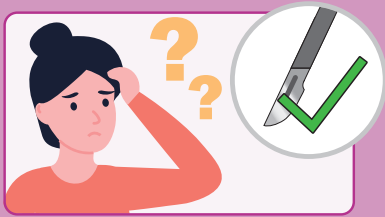


You should be fully recovered in 4 – 6 weeks.



This operation can stop the pain coming back. Sometimes things go wrong. These things are called **complications**.

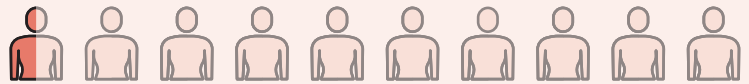
You can read about these on page 8.



If I have an operation with mesh, will my hernia come back?

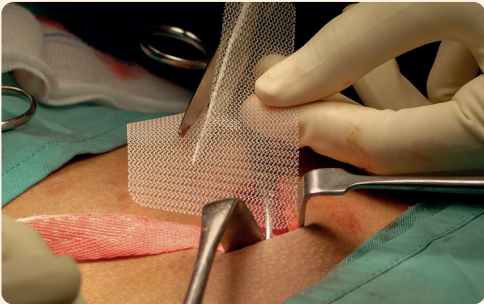


Hernia comes back within 3 years



Hernias come back in **0.5 people**

Hernias do not come back in **9.5 people**



What is a mesh?

Mesh is flexible plastic material that your surgeon uses to patch the hole that caused your hernia.

Mesh can be different sizes and shapes.

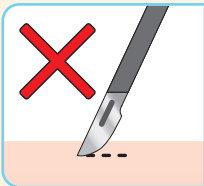
Mesh can be different thicknesses.

Your surgeon will choose a mesh that is best for you and your hernia.

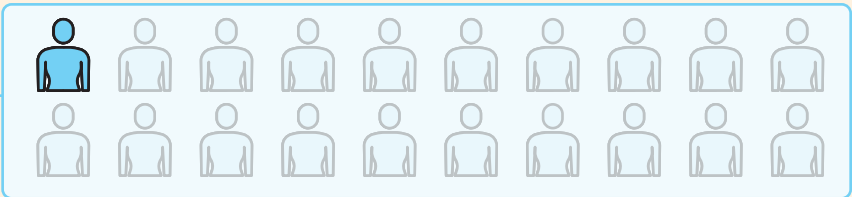


If I have an operation will my pain go away?

After 2 years how many have serious pain?

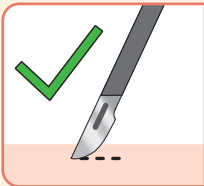


If I do not have an operation

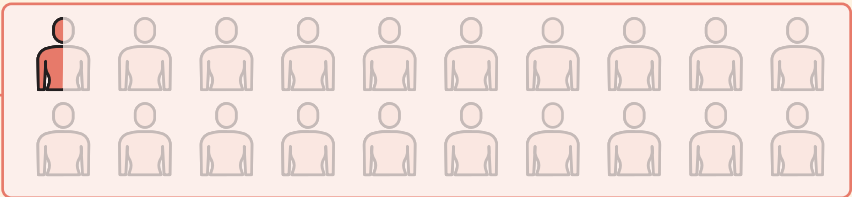


1 has serious pain

19 do not have serious pain



If I have an operation



Less than 1 has serious pain

More than 19 do not have serious pain



Sometimes people still have pain even if their hernia is fixed. This is usually because the pain was not actually because of a hernia. It was something else causing pain.



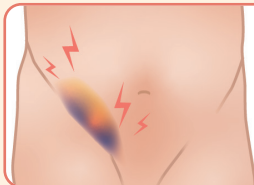
If this happens to you, see your doctor. They can look for another reason for your pain.



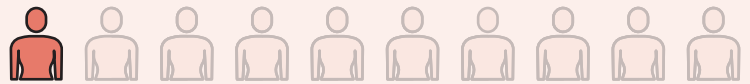
This page shows your chance of getting a complication from the operation. Complications are things that could go wrong or that you do not want to happen.



If I choose to have an operation to fix my hernia, will I get these complications?

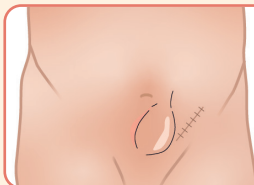


Large painful bruise



About 1 gets a bruise

About 9 do not



A seroma (this can be painful)



1 gets a seroma

9 do not

A seroma is when you get some fluid that collects in one place.

It can become hard and painful.

It can take months to go away. It will usually go away on its own.

Pain that is permanent (does not go away)



About 1 has pain that is permanent

About 9 do not have pain that is permanent



It is your choice. You can decide whether to have an operation or not. Answer the questions on this page. It can help you think about what you want to do.

You can then share this with your doctor or nurse. Tick the box that relates to you.

Tick the things that make your hernia hurt



Lying down

Yes

No



Bending over

Yes

No



Sitting up

Yes

No



Walking

Yes

No



Coughing or breathing deeply

Yes

No



Doing normal daily activities or exercising

Yes

No



Moving from sitting to standing

Yes

No



Going up or down stairs

Yes

No



How **strong is the pain** when you get it? Circle on the scale how bad your pain is.



No pain

Pain so severe I can't think clearly



It is your choice. You can decide whether to have an operation or not. Answer the questions on this page. It can help you think about what you want to do.

Tick the box that relates to you. You can then share this with your doctor or nurse.



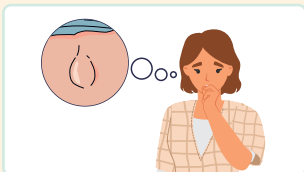
My hernia affects what I can do every day.

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



My hernia affects how I feel about myself.

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



My hernia worries me.

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



My hernia stops me socialising.

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



My hernia stops me having sex.

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



My hernia is costing me money.

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



You do not have to make a decision straight away



You can take as long as you like to decide.



You can talk to someone about how you feel.



It is always your choice. You should not feel pressured into anything you do not want to do.

This space is where your doctor or nurse can write down what you can try and what to do next:



Hernia

Is a weak spot or hole inside your body and something like your gut can poke through. It can be painful.

Inguinal hernia

Is when the hernia happens in your groin.

Groin

Is where your legs meet your tummy.

Complication

Is something you didn't want to happen when you have an operation.

Treatment

Is something you can do to help with pain or symptoms.

Catheter

Is a tube a doctor or nurse will put in that will help you pee.

Seroma

Is when you get a build up of fluid under the skin. A little bit like a blister but bigger and it can take many weeks or sometimes months to go away. It can be painful.

Intestine

Is your gut. It is a very long tube that goes from your stomach to your anus. It is where food goes after you eat.



Where to get more information

NHS page about hernias

www.nhs.uk/conditions/hernia/

EasyHealth has easy read resources about many different health conditions

www.easyhealth.org.uk

British Hernia Society has information and support for people with hernias

www.britishherniasociety.org

Mencap has a list of resources that are useful for people with learning disabilities who want to know more about living a healthy lifestyle

www.mencap.org.uk/ahealthierme

Contact details of my doctor, nurse or specialist

.....

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What will happen next?

.....

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Funding NHS England

This EasyRead decision aid was created with input from easy readers and clinicians

For declarations of conflicts of interest, to see other decision support tools, or to find out more about how this one was created and where we got our numbers from, go to:

www.england.nhs.uk/personalisedcare/shared-decision-making/decision-support-tools/