

A hernia is a protrusion of an organ or tissue through an abnormal opening. The more common hernias are groin hernias (inguinal or femoral) or abdominal wall hernias (ventral, umbilical, supraumbilical). Hernias can develop for various reasons including following surgery, due to genetic or environmental factors, or activities such as straining, chronic coughing, smoking, constipation, or heavy lifting. Hernias are almost always treated with surgery, via a laparoscopic (keyhole) or open approach.

Expected Postoperative Effects:

- You may experience drowsiness, fatigue, or dizziness as a result of the anesthetic.
- You will very likely experience pain and discomfort following this procedure. For this, you will be prescribed pain medication.
- Some patients experience constipation following this procedure. You can take stool softeners or laxatives such as Movicol or Metamucil, as needed. Your bowel regime should return to normal after 10 days or so. Avoid straining and limit your toileting time to 1-3 minutes.

Returning to work and activities:

- Most patients require at least 2 weeks off from work following the procedure, however, as full recovery extends for 3 months, you may feel you require additional time off. Our office can provide a medical certificate if required. If your job involves heavy lifting or strenuous activity, you will require additional time off or certain restrictions when returning to work within the 3 month recovery period.
- You will need to avoid constipation by maintaining a high fibre diet and increasing your water intake.
- You should avoid heavy lifting and strenuous activity for 12 weeks. You can gradually increase the weight you lift each week, with max 1kg during the first week, 2kg in the second week, and so on.
- For at least the first 2 weeks, you should rest as needed. This surgery is a major undertaking, and you will need to give your body adequate time to heal. If something hurts or feels like pulling on your surgery site, stop the activity immediately.
- You should do some gentle exercise each day (walking is best), but nothing that causes pain or discomfort.
- You should not swim or fully submerge your incision site for 2 weeks.
- You can reintroduce gentle aerobic exercise from 3-4 weeks.
- Do not drink alcohol, drive, operate heavy machinery, or sign legal documents for at least 24-48 hours, or while on pain medication.
- Do not drive for at least 2 weeks postoperatively, or while taking prescription pain medication. You should check with your health insurance to determine if they have any specific stipulations regarding this.

Wound Care:

- When you are discharged from the hospital you will have dressings on your laparoscopic wounds. This is usually a waterproof dressing called Comfeel. Please keep this dressing intact for 7-10 days, or until they fall off on their own.
- You can shower as normal with the dressing as this will be waterproof. Pat the dressing dry.
- The stitches used are usually dissolvable. If they are not, Dr Urquhart will arrange a review to remove them.
- After 7-10 days, the dressing can be removed. You will be able to see the healing wound. You can, if you feel more comfortable, cover the wound with a simple cover dressing to prevent it from rubbing on clothes, but this is not necessary.
- If you have any concerns about your wound (redness, swelling, or discharge) please contact the office. We may ask you to forward a photograph of the wound. It is normal for the wound site to initially have some redness as the wound heals.
- For inguinal hernia repairs, it is normal to have some initial swelling or bruising in the groin. This should subside within 1-2 weeks.
- Ice Packs to the surgical site, over insulation, can help to ease discomfort.
- Brace your incisions with a small pillow when coughing or sneezing.

Follow-Up Appointment:

You should call the office on 1300 008 883 to arrange a postoperative appointment with Dr Urquhart. This should be made within 4-8 weeks.

Contact the rooms if you experience any of the following:

- Persistent and increasing pain
- Increasing abdominal or groin swelling
- Fever, chills, or high temperature
- If the incision site feels hot
- Swelling, redness, bleeding or foul-smelling drainage from the wound
- Persistent nausea or vomiting
- Difficulty passing urine or bowel movements

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the clinic on 1300 008 883. If you begin to feel unwell after hours, please contact the after-hours nurse at St Vincent's Hospital, or present to your nearest emergency department.