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GS22lite Epigastric Hernia Repair (adult)

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This document will give you information about an epigastric hernia repair. If you have any questions, you should ask your GP or other relevant health professional.

What is an epigastric hernia?

An epigastric hernia is where fat pushes out through a weakness in the wall of the abdomen between the umbilicus and sternum and forms a lump (see figure 1). The most common symptom is pain caused by the fat being pinched by the abdominal wall.

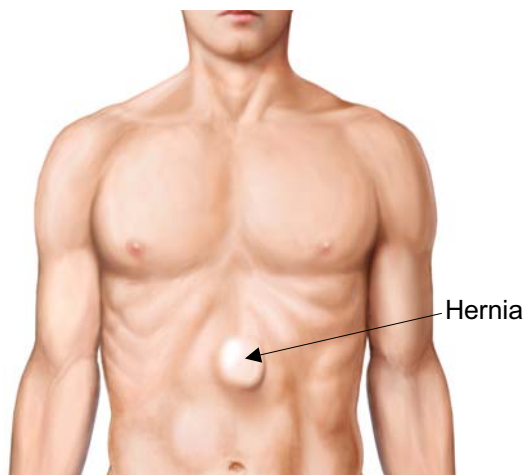


Figure 1

Position of an epigastric hernia

What are the benefits of surgery?

You should no longer have the hernia. Surgery can help to relieve pain if it is caused by the hernia. You may still have pain if it is caused by another problem.

Are there any alternatives to surgery?

The hernia can be left alone but pain caused by the hernia will usually continue and complications can happen. The hernia will not go away without an operation.

What does the operation involve?

Surgery to repair an epigastric hernia is usually performed under a general anaesthetic. The operation usually takes about half an hour.

Your surgeon will make a cut over the hernia and free up the 'hernial sac'.

If only fat is pushing through, your surgeon will either remove the fat or push it back.

If contents of the abdomen are also pushing through, they will place the contents back inside the abdomen.

Your surgeon will close the weak spot with strong stitches or a synthetic mesh (for larger hernias).

What complications can happen?

1 General complications

- Pain
- Bleeding
- Infection of the surgical site (wound)
- Unsightly scarring
- Blood clots

2 Specific complications

- Developing a lump
- Injury to structures within the abdomen

How soon will I recover?

You should be able to go home the same day.

You should gradually increase how much you walk around over the first few days after your operation.

You should be able to return to work after one to two weeks depending on the extent of surgery and your type of work.

Regular exercise should help you to return to normal activities as soon as possible. Before you start exercising, you should ask a member of the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

Occasionally the hernia comes back.

Summary

An epigastric hernia is a common condition caused by a weakness in the abdominal wall between the umbilicus and sternum. If left untreated, an epigastric hernia can occasionally cause serious complications.

Acknowledgements

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