

Hernia Surgery

Patient Guide



FISHER | TITUS
MEDICAL CENTER

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PATIENT AND FAMILY EDUCATION IS IMPORTANT.

This educational book contains medical information specifically designed to help you understand your health needs.

To help you the most, it is important for you to continue using this book after you return home. Write information down in this book and take it with you to doctor appointments and if you return to the hospital.

Use this book as a guide to:

- Answer questions about your condition
- Learn about treatment and medications
- Understand diet restrictions
- Know when to call your doctor
- Learn self-care behaviors that will help you prevent your condition from worsening

Inside the Abdomen and Groin

Typically, your abdomen and groin are kept apart by a wall of muscle and other tissues. This wall exists to protect and enclose the organs in your abdomen. There are no natural openings in this wall other than small canals that allow nerves, blood vessels, and other necessary structures to pass through the abdomen wall between the abdomen and groin. A hernia occurs because of a weakness in the abdominal wall, most often when tissues in the abdomen bulge into the groin. (*diagram of abdomen labeling and explaining inguinal canal, femoral canal, muscle, connective tissue, and spermatic cord.*)

When the Abdominal Wall is Weak

Certain areas of the abdominal wall are just more prone to weakness. However, over time and because of physical stressors, they may weaken further and even tear. These weak and torn areas are what allow tissues to bulge through creating a hernia.

What Makes an Area Weak?

The canals in the abdominal wall are already prone to weakness. However, there are other openings such as former openings (like the belly button) or a healed surgical scar that are more prone to weakness. Additionally, injury and aging can weaken the abdominal wall making it vulnerable to a hernia.

Weak Areas in Men

(*diagram of male abdomen*)

In men, most hernias occur near the inguinal canal where the nerves and vessels pass between the abdomen and groin.

Weak Areas in Women

(*diagram of female abdomen*)

As with men, the most common area for hernias in women is in the inguinal canal. However, they are more likely than men to have femoral hernias.

How Hernia Surgery Works

Hernia surgery works by repairing the weakness in the abdominal wall. There are two types of repairs: traditional or tension-free. You will work with your surgeon to determine which repair is best for you. Make sure you ask any questions you have so that you can understand the procedure as best you can, including its risks. The more you understand, the more prepared you'll be to make decisions.

Risks and Complications

Just like all surgery, hernia repair has risks and possible complications associated with it. These include:

- Bleeding
- Infection
- Numbness or pain in the groin or leg
- Damage to nerves or blood vessels
- Return of the hernia
- Damage to the ovaries, testicles, or function of the testicles
- Mesh complications
- Bowel or bladder injury

Your surgeon will explain all risks and complications further. Be sure to ask any questions you may have.

Traditional Repairs

(diagram) A traditional repair can be done on any kind of hernia. In a traditional repair, an incision is made directly over the hernia. Then, the muscle around the weak area's connective tissue is sewn together and the incision is closed up with stitches, staples, surgical tape, or special glue

Tension-Free Repairs

In a tension-free repair, a special mesh material made of a strong flexible plastic is used to repair the weak area like a patch. Rather than stitching the muscle together, the mesh "patch" is stitched to nearby tissue. It is called a tension-free repair because it repairs the damaged area without causing tension on the surrounding muscles' connective tissue. The mesh stays in the body and over time the surrounding tissues grow into the mesh, thus, strengthening the repair.

Repair in Front *(diagram)* Mesh is placed in front of the weakened area.

Repair in Back *(diagram)* Mesh is placed behind the weakened area.

Bi-Layer Repair *(diagram)* Mesh is placed above, behind, and through the weakened area.

Repairing Inguinal Hernias

You will discuss the best method of repairing your hernia with your surgeon.

Reducing the Hernia *(diagram)*

An incision is made above the weakened area so that the hernia sac and any protruding tissue can be pushed back into the abdomen. In some cases, it may be necessary to tie off and remove the hernia sac. After the hernia sac has either been removed or pushed back in, the weak area can then be repaired.

Repair with a Patch (*diagram*)

The mesh patch is placed in front or behind the weakened area and then is secured to the surrounding tissues. Once the mesh is in place, the skin can be closed with stitches, staples, surgical tape, or special glue.

Repair with a Plug and Patch (*diagram*)

First, a mesh plug is used to fill a hole in the abdominal wall and then a mesh patch is secured in front of the weakened area to provide extra strength. Once both pieces are in place the skin is closed with stitches, staples, surgical tape, or special glue.

Repair with a Bi-Layer Device (*diagram*)

A bi-layer device places mesh patches in front of and behind the weakened area and then connects these pieces with a mesh bridge running through the opening in the abdominal wall. Once this has been placed, the skin is closed using stitches, staples, surgical tape, or special glue.

Repairing Umbilical Hernias

Umbilical hernias are hernias that form at the belly button. This type of hernia is common in adults and children and may even be present at birth. Additionally, this type of hernia can be caused by abdominal pressure from pregnancy, frequent coughing, being overweight, and other factors.

Reducing the Hernia

An incision is made in order to reach the weakened area. Then, the hernia sac and any other protruding tissues are pushed back into the abdomen. Sometimes it is necessary to tie off the hernia sac and remove it. Once the hernia sac has either been removed or pushed back into the abdomen, the weakened area can be repaired.

Repairing the Weakness

To repair the weakness in the abdomen, a traditional repair may be done or a mesh patch may be placed in front of or behind the weakened area and secured to surrounding tissues. Once the repair has been made, the skin is closed using stitches, staples, surgical tape, or special glue. If mesh was used, the mesh will stay in the abdomen and over time, new tissue will grow into the mesh strengthening the repair and preventing the hernia from recurring.

Repairing Incisional Hernias

Incisional hernias occur when tissue bulges through a scar left from an older surgical incision. These hernias can occur months or even years after a surgical procedure has been performed. As time goes on, these hernias can widen and become difficult to repair. Additionally, incisional hernias can become strangulated which requires emergency surgery.

Reducing the Hernia

An incision is first made through the old surgery scar. Then, the hernia sac and any other protruding tissue are pushed back into the abdomen. Sometimes it is necessary to tie the hernia sac and remove it. Once the hernia sac has either been removed or pushed back into the abdomen, the weakened area can be repaired.

Repairing the Weakness

To repair the weakness in the abdomen, a traditional repair may be done or a mesh patch may be placed in front of or behind the weakened area and secured to surrounding tissues. Once the repair

has been made, the skin is closed using stitches, staples, surgical tape, or special glue. If mesh was used, the mesh will stay in the abdomen and over time, new tissue will grow into the mesh strengthening the repair and preventing the hernia from recurring.

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Your Recovery

You can help make your surgery a success by taking an active role in your recovery. It is normal to experience some pain, bruising, and swelling after surgery. Be sure to follow any instructions your surgeon gives you on caring for your incision. Then, begin easing back into your routine starting with taking short walks as soon as you can in order to help prevent blood clots in the legs and help speed healing. Make sure you keep all follow up appointments.

Reduce Swelling

In the first few days following your surgery, the area surrounding the incision will be swollen, discolored, and sore. To help reduce swelling, place an ice pack or a bag of frozen vegetables in a thin towel and put it on the swollen area. Be sure to do this 3 to 5 times a day for 15 to 20 minutes at a time to reduce swelling. Your surgeon will give you care instructions for your incision, be sure to follow them. Additionally, you should ask your surgeon when it is okay to begin bathing again; usually this is a day or two after the procedure.

If a groin Hernia was repaired...If you had a groin hernia repaired you may have worsening swelling after a few days due to blood and fluids that can collect in the groin and genitals. Additionally, severe bruising on the scrotum (men), labia (women), or thighs is common. If you have discomfort, wearing supportive underwear, such as briefs, may help.

Manage Pain

You may experience pain the first few days following surgery as well as feeling bloated and tired. Your surgeon will prescribe pain medications as needed but don't wait for your pain to get bad, take your medications on time and as directed. Because some pain medications can cause constipation, your surgeon may also recommend a laxative or stool softener.

Return to Activity

As soon as you feel able, you may get back into your regular routine but, take it easy at first. The following tips will help you get back to normal along with following all of your surgeon's advice for recovery:

- Take short walks to improve circulation
- Avoid heavy lifting as directed
- Ask your surgeon when you may return to work
- Eat healthy, high-fiber foods and drink lots of fluids
- You can begin having sex again when you feel ready

Keep Follow-Up Appointments

During your recovery, it's important that you keep all of your follow up appointments. Follow-up appointments let your surgeon check your progress and make sure you're healing well. Additionally, you may need to have stitches, staples, or a bandage removed during a follow-up appointment. If any new symptoms appear, make sure you tell your surgeon during your next office visit. Finally, during follow-up appointments, your surgeon can help answer any questions or concerns you may have

When to Call the Surgeon

If you experience any of the following symptoms you should call your surgeon:

- Fever of 100.4 °F (38 °C) or higher
- A large amount of swelling or bruising (some testicular swelling and bruising is common)
- Bleeding or increasing pain
- Increasing redness or drainage of the incision
- Trouble urinating
- Nausea or vomiting

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Robotic Surgery

***da Vinci* Surgery**

Ask your doctor about multi-port and single-site *da Vinci* surgery. Single-site is performed through a single incision using state of the art precision instruments. Patients who choose single-site *da Vinci* surgery have virtually no scar remaining due to the surgery being performed through a single incision in the belly button. By entering through this small incision in the belly button, surgeons are able to dramatically limit visible scarring.

The primary potential benefits of *Single-Site da Vinci* surgery include:

- Minimal scarring
- Minimal pain
- Low blood loss
- Fast recovery
- Short hospital stay
- High patient satisfaction

As with any surgery, however, these benefits cannot be guaranteed since surgery is unique to each patient and procedure.

The Enabling Technology

da Vinci Surgical System

The *da Vinci* Surgical System is designed to provide surgeons with enhanced capabilities, including high-definition 3D vision and a magnified view. Though it is often called a “robot,” *da Vinci* cannot act on its own. The surgery is entirely by your doctor. He or she controls the *da Vinci* System, which translates all hand movements into smaller, more precise movements of tiny instruments inside your body.

Together, *da Vinci* technology allows your doctor to perform complex procedures through just a few tiny openings. As a result, you can get back to your life without the usual recovery following major surgery.

The *da Vinci* System has been used successfully worldwide in hundreds of thousands of procedures to date.

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DEPRESSION and

Breaking Free: DEPRESSION & CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE



Depression is a condition in which a person feels discouraged, sad, hopeless, unmotivated or disinterested in life in general. When these feelings last for a short period of time, it may be a case of “the blues.” But when such feeling last for more than two weeks and when the feelings interfere with daily activities such as taking care of family, spending time with friends, or going to work or school, it's likely a major depressive episode. Major depression is a treatable illness that affects the way a person thinks, feels, behaves and functions.

A sudden or unexpected health event – such as a heart attack, stroke, diagnosis of cancer, or other serious illness or injury – can change your life in many ways. Feelings of shock, anger, grief, loss and sadness are common. These feelings usually pass with time, however, if they cause ongoing stress, you may be at greater risk of developing depression and anxiety.

Similarly, if you live with a chronic illness (e.g. heart disease, diabetes, arthritis or asthma), you are also at greater risk of developing depression and anxiety. Less common chronic physical illnesses that can also be associated with depression include chronic pain, Parkinson's Disease and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome.

Sometimes, it can be difficult to know whether you are feeling down because of your physical health, or if you do actually have symptoms of depression or anxiety. Sometimes it can be both. If you're unsure if what you're feeling is a normal reaction to what is happening in your life, talk to your doctor, another health professional or a member of your health care team. With open discussion, they can help you to work out what's going on and whether you could benefit from additional advice or treatment.

The Benefits of Becoming TOBACCO FREE



LEARN MORE

You can learn more about our quit smoking programs online at fisher-titus.org or call us at 419-668-8108, ext. 6320.

Our Tobacco Educators are happy to help you create a quitting plan.

PLANNING TO QUIT SMOKING IS A BIG STEP

Only you can decide if and when you are ready to quit. Quitting is hard, but the benefits will be worth it. We, at Fisher-Titus Medical Center, are committed to helping people become ex-tobacco users and would like to help you create a quitting plan that works for you. Your plan will involve coping skills to help you get through the urges to smoke, ways to modify routines, and a strategy to prevent relapse.

The Benefits of Becoming Tobacco Free

HEALTH BENEFITS

- Reduced risk of lung cancer, heart disease, and chronic lung disease
- Fewer wrinkles and softer skin
- Improved sense of taste and smell

FAMILY BENEFITS

- Reduced exposure to second hand smoke
- Sets a good example for children

FINANCIAL BENEFITS

- Save hundreds of dollars each year
- Save money on medical bills
- Save money on insurance premiums

Learn about our smoking cessation programs at www.fisher-titus.org, or call us at 419-668-8101, ext. 6320. Our Tobacco Educators would be happy to help you create a quitting plan.



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Where to FIND HELP



For your convenience, below are some agencies and services available in the Erie and Huron County area. This shouldn't be considered a complete list; please contact your healthcare provider for more information.

CARDIAC REHAB

Fisher-Titus Medical Center

419-660-2600 HURON COUNTY
1-800-668-8788 ext 6325 ERIE COUNTY

MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Firelands Counseling & Recovery Services

419-668-3737 HURON COUNTY
419-557-5177 ERIE COUNTY

Dr. Upender Gehlot
Rachel Velishek, LPCC
419-668-0311

Hotline
1-800-826-1306

Alzheimer's Support Group
419-668-8101 ext 3112 HURON COUNTY

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Cancer Society
888-227-2345

American Diabetes Association
1-800-342-2383

American Heart Association
1-877-242-4277

American Lung Association
1-800-586-4872

American Red Cross
419-626-1641 HURON COUNTY
1-800-589-2286 ERIE COUNTY

LOCAL OFFICES / ORGANIZATIONS

Area Agency on Aging, Inc.
Passport, Long-term Care, HEAP, Heating
Bill Assistance
419-524-4144 - Mansfield HURON COUNTY

Carriage House of Fisher-Titus Medical Center
1-800-860-5799 HURON COUNTY

Catholic Charities
Financial Classes, Adult Advocacy, Miriam House
419-668-3073 HURON COUNTY

Community Action Commission
HEAP, PIPP, Summer Cooling, Ohio Benefit Bank,
Various Other Assistance Programs
419-668-9823 HURON COUNTY
419-935-7232 WILLARD

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10. COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Huron County Job and Family Services

Children's Services, Family Support Services,
Workforce Development, Adult Services,
Child Support

419-668-8126 [HURON COUNTY](#)

419-626-6781 [ERIE COUNTY](#)

Domestic Violence

1-800-931-7233

Transit & Taxis

419-663-3340 [HURON COUNTY TRANSIT](#)

419-706-8294 [TERRY'S TAXI](#)

419-577-6178 [TIJUANA](#)

Suicide Prevention Hotline

1-800-784-2443 [HURON COUNTY](#)

Public Health

Women, Infants and Children, Early
Intervention, Flu Shots, Immunizations

419-668-1652 [HURON COUNTY](#)

419-626-5623 [ERIE COUNTY](#)

Help Line Fisher-Titus Medical Center Quality & Case Management

419-668-8101 ext. 6356 [HURON COUNTY](#)

Home Health Agencies

419-668-8101 ext. 6356 [HURON COUNTY](#)

Kidney Foundation of Ohio, Inc.

216-771-2700 [CLEVELAND](#)

Services for the Aging Meals on Wheels

419-668-8821 [HURON COUNTY](#)

Salvation Army

419-929-3320 [NEW LONDON](#) 567-224-1523 [PLYMOUTH](#)

419-668-4090 [NORWALK](#) 419-933-2954 [WILLARD](#)

Social Security

1-800-772-1213 [NATIONAL](#)

1-866-588-7397 [LOCAL](#)

Stein Hospice

1-800-625-5692 [HURON COUNTY](#)

Veteran Services

419-668-4150 [HURON COUNTY](#)

United Fund / United Way

419-668-0269 [HURON COUNTY](#)

419-625-4672 [ERIE COUNTY](#)

Wheelchair Van/ NCEMS

419-663-1367 [HURON COUNTY](#)

HURON COUNTY FOOD PANTRIES

Plymouth Shiloh Co-Op

419-933-2568

Fish and Loaves

419-484-2814 [BELLEVUE](#)

Our Lady of Lourdes

419-929-4410 [NEW LONDON](#)

Norwalk Alliance

419-668-9208

Salvation Army

419-929-3320 [NEW LONDON](#)

419-668-4090 [NORWALK](#)

567-224-1523 [PLYMOUTH](#)

419-933-2954 [WILLARD](#)

Norwalk Area Food Bank

419-660-1144

Willard Area Food Bank

419-933-4146

Wakeman Caring

440-839-2023

Greenwich/North Fairfield United Methodist Church

419-744-2359

Victory Baptist

419-668-6532 [NORWALK](#)

Monroeville Congregational Community Church

419-465-2165

GET CONNECTED WITH AVAILABLE COMMUNITY RESOURCES

To find or give help, call 211.

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