

If you would like this leaflet in large print, braille, audio version or in another language, please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01872 252793



Your child's inguinal hernia repair

Information for parents and carers



One + all | we care

What is an inguinal hernia?

An inguinal hernia is where the contents of the abdomen push down into the groin and often, in boys, into the scrotum. These occur in children due to a developmental abnormality in the groin area. In boys, a sac-like structure connecting the abdomen to the scrotum fails to close completely. When this happens, some abdominal contents can herniate into the sac. Occasionally this persistent sac may surround the testis, and fluid from the abdomen may trickle down into the scrotum. This is called a hydrocele or patent processus vaginalis (PPV). A hernia can also occur in girls, which is similar to that in boys.

How is it treated?

With an operation called a herniotomy to repair the inguinal hernia.

What does it involve?

The operation is done under general anaesthetic and usually involves one incision in the groin. The surgeon will locate the hernial sac and tie this off. The wound is then closed with dissolvable sutures which will take up to 6-8 weeks to dissolve. If necessary the surgeon may insert a small telescope to look at the other side. Sometimes the whole procedure may be performed through keyhole surgery (known as laparoscopy).

Are there any risks or complications?

All operations have some risks. Possible risks and complications for herniotomy include:

- infection in the surgical wound
- bleeding
- injury to structures within the hernia
- from the testicles) or reduced blood supply to the testicle
- in girls there may be damage to fallopian tubes or ovaries
- the hernia returning.

At home

The area and scrotum will be sore and may be swollen and bruised for a couple of days following surgery. This is normal and will settle within around seven days. Your child may need regular simple painkillers, such as paracetamol and ibuprofen for the first 24 hours, then as needed.

Your child will be discharged home with a small dressing in place, which may be removed after two days. After this time your child is allowed to shower or have a quick bath.

When can my child resume normal activities?

Most children naturally limit their own activity for a few days until they feel comfortable and well.

Keep your child off school for seven days. This will give them time to recover from the anaesthetic and from the operation.

Avoid sports and physical activity for at least three weeks following the operation. This includes swimming in the sea and public swimming pools.

Will my child need a follow up?

If your child needs an outpatient follow up, you will be informed and an appointment sent to you in the post.

Any questions?

If you have any problems or concerns, please contact your GP or Harlyn ward on 01872 253909