

LEARNING ABOUT HERNIA REPAIR

Hernias Are More Common in Men Than Women

Approximately 4.5 Million People in the U.S. Suffer from Abdominal Hernias

A hernia is a bulge or protrusion of a body tissue or organ through the structure that normally contains it. An abdominal hernia is an opening or weakness in the muscular structure of the wall of the abdomen. Common concerns include understanding the risks and how hernias are treated. Please read the following summary for more information.

01 | Development and Risk Factors

Are you at risk for developing a hernia? Obesity, chronic cough, smoking and a family history of hernias can increase your risk. Hernias are caused by a combination of muscle weakness and strain. Common causes of muscle weakness include:

- Failure of the abdominal wall to close properly in the womb (congenital defect)
- Age
- Chronic coughing
- Damage from injury or surgery

Factors that strain your body and may cause a hernia include:

- Pregnancy, which puts pressure on your abdomen
- Constipation, which causes strain during bowel movements
- Heavy weight lifting
- Fluid in the abdomen
- Sudden weight gain
- Persistent coughing or sneezing

02 | Symptoms and Diagnosis

The most common symptom of a hernia is a bulge or lump in the affected area. You may also feel pain or discomfort in the affected area, especially when bending over, coughing or lifting. Weakness and pressure in the abdomen is also common.

Inguinal or incisional hernias are usually diagnosed during a physical examination. Your medical provider

may also request certain medical imaging tests and an endoscopy to determine to locate the hernia and rule out other conditions.

03 | When Surgery is Recommended

Depending on the size and severity of the hernia, your physician may first recommend dietary and lifestyle changes to improve discomfort. If symptoms do not improve, or if the hernia is severe, surgery may be the best option. In years past, this was performed as an open-abdominal procedure; however, improvements in technique have led to the following, less invasive option:

- **Laparoscopic or Closed Repair** – with this technique, special instruments are inserted through small incisions in the abdomen through which the surgeon performs the process. A piece of mesh is positioned to reinforce the area. The mesh is a flexible material that encourages new tissue growth. A smaller incision results in less discomfort post-surgery, minimal scarring and quicker recovery.

For more information on hernia repair, please visit: <http://www.medtronic.com/us-en/patients/treatments-therapies/hernia-surgery.html>

***Did You Know?**
Incisional Hernias can occur
years after surgery*

References

<http://www.healthline.com/health/hernia#Overview1>

<http://www.rxlist.com/hernia/drugs-condition.htm>