

What Should I Expect After Surgery?

Most hernia operations are performed on an outpatient basis, and therefore you will probably go home on the same day of the operation. Rarely, individuals with larger hernias or with certain medical conditions will be observed in hospital overnight.

After completion of the operation, you will be transferred to the recovery room where you will be monitored until you are fully awake, your pain is well controlled, and you can walk unassisted.

Pain after Surgery - Local anaesthetic is usually injected into the wound (while the patient is still under anesthesia) to minimise pain immediately after surgery and this should last for four to six hours.

It is normal to have some pain after your operation, particularly in the first 48 hours.

To reduce the need for narcotics for pain management, it is recommended that you take Tylenol (Acetaminophen) and Advil (Ibuprofen) regularly for the first 48 hours, whether you are having pain or not. Most patients will not require anything stronger. A prescription is provided for a mild narcotic (Tramacets). Only fill this prescription if the Acetaminophen and Ibuprofen do not control your pain in the first 6 hours. Narcotic medications are often constipating, so a stool softener is also prescribed (Colace).

Pain should gradually decrease over 2 to 4 weeks post-surgery.

Diet - Resume normal diet as soon you feel like drinking and eating. Avoid alcohol while taking narcotic medications.

Activity - You are encouraged to resume light activities and walking immediately after surgery. Avoid heavy lifting (over 10 lbs) for 4 – 6 weeks,

Most people can return to office work within 2 weeks after surgery. Full activities can be resumed in 4 – 6 weeks. Comfort should be your guide to most activities.

Driving - Most people can drive after about 1-week post-surgery. You must not be taking any narcotic medications and must be able to brake comfortably if you need to make a sudden stop.

Wound Care - It is safe to shower 48 hours after surgery. Pat the wound dry gently. Do not rub or apply soap to the area. Tub baths are safe after 2 – 3 weeks.

If Steri-Strips are used, these can be removed after 7 days (they peel off like a Band-Aid). The suture under the skin dissolves by itself. Some patients have skin staples which need to be removed. An appointment for this is made with the Ambulatory Nursing Clinic at the hospital prior to discharge.

Numbness beneath the scar is common - this may be temporary or permanent.

Mild ooze of blood from the incision is not unusual. Apply gentle pressure to the area and change a dry dressing as needed.

Bruising around the wound and tracking down to the lower abdomen is sometimes seen - this looks dramatic but is harmless and will settle spontaneously. Wearing a tight-fitting ABDOMINAL BINDER and applying an ice pack to the area for the first 24 – 48 hours may help reduce the swelling and bruising.

If the wound becomes red, hot or starts to drain pus or blood, contact your surgeon's office. If not available, go to Credit Valley ER in case you have a wound infection and need antibiotics.

Follow Up Post Surgery

An appointment with your surgeon will be scheduled at the Ambulatory Care Clinic at Credit Valley Hospital. Hospital staff will contact you for an appointment time and date within a few days after surgery. If you are not called within a week after surgery, please contact our office.

When To Call Your Doctor's Office (or go to the emergency)

- Fever over 38.3 degrees C (101 F)
- Severe Bleeding or other drainage from your incision(s)
- Foul smelling drainage (pus) from any incision
- Redness surrounding any of your incisions that is worsening or getting bigger
- Progressive swelling of the abdomen or groin
- Nausea, vomiting, and/or inability to eat or drink liquids
- Inability to urinate
- Pain that is not relieved by your pain medications
- Cough or shortness of breath

