

# Hernia Repair: What to Expect at Home

## Your Recovery

You are likely to have pain for the next few days. You may also feel like you have the flu, and you may have a low fever and feel tired and nauseated. This is common.

You should feel better after a few days and will probably feel much better in 7 days. For several weeks you may feel twinges or pulling in the hernia repair when you move. You may have some bruising on the scrotum and along the penis. This is normal.

Men will need to wear a jockstrap or briefs, not boxers, for scrotal support for several days after a groin (inguinal) hernia repair. Spandex bicycle shorts may provide good support.

## How can you care for yourself at home?

### Activity

Rest when you feel tired. Getting enough sleep will help you recover.

Try to walk each day. Start by walking a little more than you did the day before. Bit by bit, increase the amount you walk. Walking boosts blood flow and helps prevent pneumonia and constipation.

Put ice or a cold pack on the area of your hernia repair for 10 to 15 minutes at a time. Try to do this every 1 to 2 hours for the first 24 hours (when you are awake) or until the swelling goes down. Put a thin cloth between the ice and your skin.

Avoid strenuous activities **FOR 2 WEEKS**, such as biking, jogging, weight lifting, or aerobic exercise.

Avoid lifting anything that would make you strain. This may include heavy grocery bags and milk containers, a heavy briefcase or backpack, cat litter or dog food bags, a child, or a vacuum cleaner.

You may drive when you are no longer taking pain medicine and can quickly move your foot from the gas pedal to the brake. You must also be able to sit comfortably for a long period of time, even if you do not plan to go far. You might get caught in traffic.

Most people are able to return to work within 1 to 2 weeks after surgery.

### Diet

You can eat your normal diet. If your stomach is upset, try bland, low-fat foods like plain rice, broiled chicken, toast, and yogurt.

Drink plenty of fluids (unless your doctor tells you not to).

You may notice that your bowel movements are not regular right after your surgery. This is common. Avoid constipation and straining with bowel movements. You may want to take a fiber supplement every day. If you have not had a bowel movement after a couple of days, ask your doctor about taking a mild laxative.

## **Medicines**

Take pain medicines exactly as directed.

If the doctor gave you a prescription medicine for pain, take it as prescribed.

If you are not taking a prescription pain medicine, take an over-the-counter medicine such as acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), or naproxen (Aleve). Read and follow all instructions on the label.

Do not take two or more pain medicines at the same time unless the doctor told you to. Many pain medicines have acetaminophen, which is Tylenol. Too much acetaminophen (Tylenol) can be harmful.

If you think your pain medicine is making you sick to your stomach:

Take your medicine after meals (unless your doctor has told you not to).

## **Incision care**

**Remove outer gauze dressing in 48hrs**

**Leave steri-strips in place until they fall off or in 1-2 weeks.**

**Wash the area daily with warm, soapy water and pat it dry.**