



This document will give you information about an inguinal hernia repair. If you have any questions, you should ask your GP or other relevant health professional.

### What is an inguinal hernia?

An inguinal hernia happens at the inguinal canal. This is a narrow passage where, in boys, blood vessels supplying the testicle pass through the abdominal wall. In girls, the connection is between the abdomen and labia. The passage usually closes shortly after your child is born. If it remains open, the contents of the abdomen can push down towards the scrotum or labia (see figure 1).



Figure 1  
An inguinal hernia in a boy

A hernia can be dangerous because the intestines or other structures within the abdomen can get trapped and have their blood supply cut off (strangulated hernia).

### What are the benefits of surgery?

Your child should no longer have the hernia. Surgery should prevent your child from having any of the serious complications that a hernia can cause.

### Are there any alternatives to surgery?

A hernia will not get better without surgery.

### What does the operation involve?

Inguinal hernias can be repaired using keyhole surgery but most inguinal hernias in children are repaired through a cut on the groin.

The operation is performed under a general anaesthetic and usually takes about an hour. Your surgeon will make a cut on the groin and remove the 'hernial sac'.

### What complications can happen?

#### 1 General complications

- Pain
- Bleeding
- Infection of the surgical site (wound)
- Unsightly scarring
- Inflammation

#### 2 Specific complications

- Developing a collection of blood or fluid
- Developing a swelling around the testicle
- Injury to structures within the hernia
- Injury to nerves
- Damage of the blood supply to the testicle
- The testicle may come to lie higher in the scrotum
- Damage to the tube that carries sperm

### How soon will my child recover?

Your child should be able to go home the same day or the day after.

Your doctor will tell you when your child can return to school.

Most children make a full recovery. However, the hernia can come back.

### Summary

An inguinal hernia is a common condition. It is caused by the contents of the abdomen pushing down towards the scrotum or labia. If left untreated, an inguinal hernia can cause serious complications.

### Acknowledgements

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