

Inguinal Hernia Repair

An inguinal hernia occurs when the bowel slides through an open canal into a pouch in the groin called the hernial sac. This appears as a lump in the child's groin. Inguinal hernias are common in childhood, especially in boys.

Length of surgery

Your child will be away from you for approximately 45 to 60 minutes.

Post operatively

Some children may be distressed and upset when they return from theatre. This can be normal after an anaesthetic and they should settle after a short time. If your child returns to the ward or day surgery unit upset, it is important that you comfort your child and keep them safe from hurting themselves.

The nurse will monitor your child closely after the operation by taking their pulse rate, checking their breathing and assessing their pain.

A small amount of blood can be expected under the bandages immediately after the operation.

Your child will need to stay in the ward for a minimum of two hours, sometimes longer depending on their recovery. They must be fully awake and eating and drinking before discharge. Some children will be required to stay overnight if they are very young.

Pain management

Your child will be given pain relief during their surgery and should be comfortable on return from theatre.

Please speak to your nurse if you feel that your child is in pain.

On discharge the nursing staff will give you a pain management pamphlet regarding pain relief at home.

Eating and drinking

Your child can usually start drinking as soon as they are fully awake after surgery. When drinking well, they will be able to start eating a light diet. Please check with your nurse before giving your child anything to eat or drink.

Babies can breast feed or bottle feed immediately.

Some children may experience nausea and vomiting after surgery. Please tell your nurse if your child feels nauseous or vomits.

There is no need for a special diet after this surgery, but it is recommended that your child avoids fatty or junk food for approximately 24 hours after surgery.

At home

Pain relief

Paracetamol may be given every 4-6 hours for 2 days after surgery if required. Please refer to the paracetamol bottle for the correct dose for your child.

Nausea and vomiting

After day surgery, do not be concerned if your child vomits once or twice after leaving hospital.

If they vomit or feel sick, stop giving them food for about an hour, then try giving them a drink, followed by a light diet. They can then have as much as they can manage without feeling sick.

If your child keeps vomiting, please seek medical attention by either calling your child's surgeon or going to your nearest emergency department.

Activity

Your child should reduce their activities for 24 hours after surgery. Please make sure that your child has adult supervision as they fully recover from the anaesthetic and surgery.

Your child should be able to return to school/ childcare/ kindergarten after three to five days. Please check with your doctor before you leave the hospital.

Wound care

A clear or white (Hypafix) dressing will cover the wound. Leave the dressing in place for five days unless advised otherwise.

Sutures (stitches) used in the surgery are dissolvable and will not require removal.

Some bruising can be expected but if you are concerned, seek medical advice.

Observe wounds for general signs of infection. These include heat to the site, pus/ooze, foul smell, swelling, redness, fever or pain. If signs of infection are noticed, seek medical attention.

Bathing

You can bath/shower your child as normal 24 hours after surgery unless advised otherwise. If the dressing becomes wet, pat it gently to dry.

Bleeding

If bleeding occurs, sit your child down and apply firm, steady pressure to the area for 10 minutes with gauze or a clean cloth. Take the pressure off after 10 minutes and continue to watch the wound closely over the next 24 hours. If bleeding persists, apply pressure and seek immediate medical attention.

Follow up

A follow up appointment will be arranged for four to six weeks' time. It will be given to you before you go home or sent to you in the post.

If you have any concerns after your child's discharge please telephone your private surgeon or go to your GP or your nearest emergency department.

Adapted from

Inguinal Hernia Repair, Women's and Children's Hospital: Adelaide



For more information

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