

Inguinal (Groin) Hernias

What is a hernia?

A hole or weak spot can form inside the abdomen, the part of the body between the chest and hips. If this happens, some of your insides, usually your intestines, can begin to bulge out of that spot. This is called a hernia. Two types of hernias can happen in the groin, the area between your thigh and abdomen. Inguinal (ING-gwin-ul) hernias are common and happen mostly in men. Femoral (FEM-er-ul) hernias are less common and happen mostly in women.

What are the symptoms?

You may notice a painless bulge or lump in your groin area. You may also feel a painful tugging, pulling, or burning. The pain may be worse with coughing, sneezing, or straining.

Part of the intestines can become trapped inside the bulge. If this happens, there is usually severe pain, tenderness, or redness in the groin area.

When should I see a doctor?

You should see a doctor if you feel a new bulge or pain in the groin area or if the

pain and tenderness are getting worse. You should call your doctor right away if you have nausea or vomiting.

How is an inguinal hernia treated?

Small, painless hernias may not need to be treated. Surgery usually is needed for larger hernias that cause pain or if the hernia becomes trapped. Surgery can be done using a scope and without cutting the skin. It can also be done through a small cut in your skin. Results are similar with either type of surgery. Some surgeons prefer to use mesh (a loosely woven material) to help close the hernia. You can talk with your doctor about the treatment options.

How long will it take to get better after surgery?

It takes some people longer to get better than others. It depends on the type of hernia, how it is repaired, and if you have other medical conditions. Most patients feel completely better in one to two weeks.

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