

Inguinal Hernia

Inguinal hernias occur when the soft tissue, usually a portion of the membrane that lines the abdominal cavity or a portion of the intestine, protrudes through one of the weak points in the abdominal cavity. The bulge can be quite painful, especially when coughing, lifting a heavy object or coughing.

The inguinal hernia isn't dangerous alone. If it fails to get better or disappear on its own, it could end up becoming more serious. It is because of this reason that your doctor may recommend surgery to correct the hernia that is growing and becoming increasingly painful. Hernia repair is a common procedure.

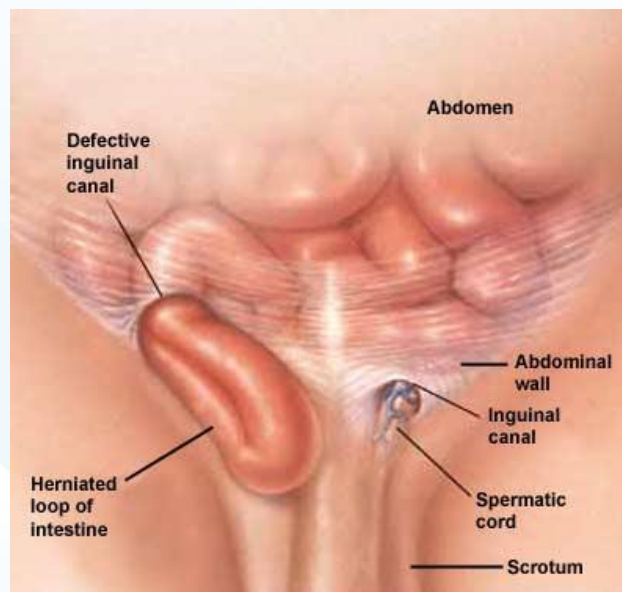
Even though some hernias don't seem to have a specific cause, others occur from any number of conditions, such as:

- A pre-existing weak area in the abdominal wall
- Previous surgery to the abdomen
- Straining during urination or bowel movements
- Increased amount of pressure in the abdomen
- Heavy lifting
- Pregnancy
- Excessive amounts of weight
- Fluid in the abdomen
- Chronic sneezing or coughing

In some individuals, the weakness leading to the hernia occurs at birth when the lining doesn't properly close. Other hernias can develop later on in life when the muscles deteriorate or weaken due to aging, coughing along with smoking and strenuous activity.

Inguinal Hernia Anatomy

The soft tissues that are commonly affected by hernias are the oblique muscles within the lower part of the abdomen. The tendons attached to the oblique muscles within the pubic bone tend to be the most vulnerable. In instances of a sports hernia, the tendons attaching to the thigh muscles of the pubic bone are also torn or stretched.



How to Treat an Inguinal Hernia:

1. Herniorrhaphy

Known as a hernia repair, an incision will be made in the groin to push the protrusion back into the abdomen. The torn or weakened part of the muscle will be sewn together. The weak area will often be reinforced with a synthetic mesh. Following surgery, you can move as soon as possible. It can take four to six weeks before you are able to do everything that you once did.

2. Laparoscopy

In this particular procedure, several incisions are made in the abdomen. A small tube with a miniscule camera is inserted into one of the incisions. Tiny instruments are inserted into the other incisions work to repair the hernia with a synthetic mesh.

Tips:

- Men are far more likely to develop this hernia than their female counterparts. Children and newborns developing hernias tend to be boys.
- Your risk of an inguinal hernia increases for those who have close relatives with one.
- Individuals who have cystic fibrosis are more likely to end up with an inguinal hernia.
- Chronic cough, such as that from smoking, increases your chance of getting one of these hernias.
- Being overweight places an extra amount of pressure on the abdomen.
- If you have a job that requires standing for extended periods or you have to perform heavy physical labor, you are at an increased risk of developing this hernia.