

HERNIOTOMY

A herniotomy is an operation to repair an inguinal hernia.

What is an inguinal hernia?

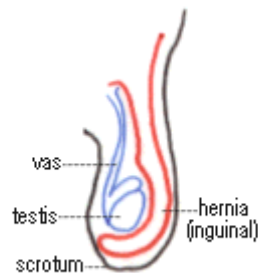
An inguinal hernia occurs when the contents of the abdomen push down into the groin and often, in boys, into the scrotum. These occur in children due to a developmental abnormality in the groin area. In boys a sac-like structure connecting the abdomen to the scrotum fails to close completely. When this happens, some abdominal contents can herniate into the sac. Occasionally this persistent sac can surround the testis; fluid from the abdomen can trickle down into the scrotum which is then called a hydrocele (it can also be known as 'patent process vaginalis' or PPV).

A hernia can also occur in girls which is similar to that in boys.

Normal scrotum



Inguinal hernia



Before the operation.

Your child will be seen by the consultant anaesthetist in the pre-operative assessment clinic. Here you can discuss details of the anaesthetic, and you will be told when your child should stop eating and drinking on the day of the operation.

When you arrive on the ward, your child will have some local anaesthetic cream applied to the back of the hands, and sometimes the feet. You will be seen by Mr Cole before the operation when you can discuss the operation again and ask any questions. Mr Cole will mark the side of the operation at this time.

The operation.

The operation is done under general anaesthetic and usually involves one incision in the groin. The hernia sac is located and any abdominal contents are gently pushed back into the abdomen. The sac is then tied off. The wound will then be closed with dissolvable sutures. The operation should take about 45 minutes.

Risks and complications.

This is usually a straightforward operation. However, all operations have possible risks and complications;

- Infection in the surgical wound
- Bleeding
- Injury to structures within the hernia
- With boys there can be damage to the vas deferens (the tube leading from the testicles) or reduced blood supply to the testicle.
- In girls damage to the fallopian tubes or ovaries
- Hernia recurrence

What to expect after surgery?

Some children may have leg weakness due to the pain relief given at the time of surgery.

The area and scrotum will be sore and may be swollen and bruised for a couple of days after surgery, you will be advised before you leave hospital about what pain relief to give your child. It is advisable to give this regularly for at least 48 hours.

Your child will probably be more comfortable in loose fitting clothes i.e. pyjamas or tracksuit.

This information has been prepared by Mr Owen Cole MBBS FRCS (Urol), Consultant Urologist at the Medical Specialist Group LLP. www.msg.gg.