



# Hernia repair surgery: aftercare advice

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## Information for patients from Day Surgery

You have had surgery to repair your hernia. The following explains what you should do when you get home to look after yourself and your wound.

### When you get home and for the first few days after your surgery

- Arrange for someone to collect you from the hospital and look after you for the first 24 hours.
- You must rest for 24 to 48 hours after your operation.
- If you have had a general anaesthetic, avoid drinking alcohol, smoking, or taking sleeping tablets for 24 hours after your operation.
- If you have had a general anaesthetic, do not drive, cook, or operate any machinery for 24 to 48 hours after your operation

### Will I be in pain after surgery?

Some discomfort is normal, but you may also get severe twinges of pain which may continue for some months after your surgery. Take pain relief tablets as prescribed by the hospital.

### How do I look after my wound dressing?

Remove your dressing five to seven days after your surgery. Only replace it before then if your wound is oozing or bleeding (the hospital will give you a fresh dressing for this). After five to seven days leave your wound uncovered, unless told otherwise by the hospital.

### Do I need to have my stitches removed?

No, your stitches are dissolvable. They can take up to two weeks to dissolve.

### Can I have a bath and shower after my surgery?

You can have a shower 48 hours after your surgery, and a bath after five days.

### When can I drive again?

You should avoid driving for at least one week after your operation. You must be able to perform an emergency stop without it hurting, before you can drive again. If in doubt, speak with your GP or insurance company.

### When can I return to work?

You can return to work when you feel well and comfortable. If you have an office based job this is usually after two weeks, but if you have a physical / manual job this can be six weeks. You should also avoid lifting anything heavy for six weeks. If in doubt, ask your GP for advice.

### When can I exercise again?

At least three times a day take a short walk of a few hundred yards or more (if you wish) to avoid stiffness of your muscles and joints.

Swimming, cycling, and other strenuous activities should all be avoided until your wound feels fully comfortable, which may take a month or more.

### What complications should I look out for?

- Swelling and discolouration of your wound, which may spread down into your scrotum or vulva, is usual and may last for up to two weeks.
- Numbness in the scrotum or vulva is also not uncommon.
- Your wound may bleed, which may be stopped by applying pressure to the wound for 10 minutes. If the bleeding continues after doing this twice, please contact Day Surgery on one of the numbers listed below.
- You may develop an infection in your wound. If you have excessive redness, pain, or swelling around your wound, please contact your GP or Day Surgery on one of the numbers listed below.

### What if I have any questions or concerns?

If you have any queries (especially if you are getting increasing pain, redness, or swelling after 48 hours), please contact Day Surgery on the numbers below or your GP.

- Canterbury Day Surgery Centre, **Kent and Canterbury Hospital**, Canterbury  
Telephone: 01227 783114 (7am to 8pm)
- Day Surgery, **Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital**, Margate  
Telephone: 01843 234499 (Monday to Friday 7am to 9pm)  
Telephone: 07887 651162 (Monday to Friday 9pm to 7am) (Bank Holidays and weekends, 24 hours a day)

- Channel Day Surgery, **William Harvey Hospital**, Ashford  
Telephone: 01233 616263 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

**This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.**

**Please let us know:**

- If you have any accessibility needs; this includes needing a hearing loop or wanting someone to come with you to your appointment.
- If you need an interpreter.
- If you need this information in another format (such as Braille, audio, large print or Easy Read).

**You can let us know this by:**

- Visiting the Trust web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/ais>).
- Calling the number at the top of your appointment letter.
- Adding this information to the Patient Portal (<https://pp.ekhuft.nhs.uk/login>).
- Telling a member of staff at your next appointment.

**Any complaints, comments, concerns or compliments**, please speak to a member of your healthcare team. Or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 01227 783145 or email ([ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net)).

**Patients should not bring large sums of money or valuables into hospital.** Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

**Further patient information leaflets** are available via the East Kent Hospitals' web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patient-information>).

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