



# Laparoscopic hernia repair: aftercare advice

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## Information for patients from Day Surgery

You have had laparoscopic 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 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 occasionally you may get severe twinges of pain which may continue for some months. Take pain relief tablets as prescribed by the hospital.

You will have three wounds after surgery - one in your umbilicus (belly button) and one on each side. These areas will be numb to start with as they will have been injected with a local anaesthetic during your operation; this anaesthetic usually wears off after about six to 10 hours after your procedure. You may feel discomfort in these wounds once it has worn off.

### I have pain in my groin area, is this normal?

Yes. Although no incision (cut) has been made in your groin, the area may feel bruised. This is related to the removal of the hernia sac and placement of the mesh. You may also experience swelling and bruising in this area, which may not appear for 24 to 48 hours after your operation.

### **My shoulder is hurting as well, is this normal?**

Yes. You may feel some discomfort in your left shoulder. This called “referred pain” and is caused by the gas used for the keyhole surgery technique. This discomfort should wear off within two to three days.

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

Keep the dressings on and keep your wounds dry for a week after your surgery. This will give your wounds a chance to heal. Once you remove your dressing keep your wound uncovered, unless told otherwise by the hospital.

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

Your surgeon will have used either dissolvable or steri-strips to close your wounds.

- Dissolvable stitches will dissolve on their own within two weeks.
- If steri-strips only are used they usually fall off on their own around five days after your surgery. If after five days they are still in place you can remove them yourself. They can be soaked off in the bath.

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

You can have a shower 24 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 enough. This is usually after two weeks if you have an office based job, but can be at least a month if your job is physical / manual. 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 activities should all be avoided for at least a month after surgery, and only when your wound is completely comfortable.

### **What complications should I look out for?**

- Your wound site(s) may bleed, which may be stopped by applying pressure to the wound for 10 minutes. If the bleeding continues after doing this twice, phone Day Surgery on one of the numbers listed below.
- You may develop an infection in your wound. If you develop 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 do not hesitate to 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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