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## Incisional Hernia Repair

This page will give you information about an open incisional hernia repair. If you have any questions, you should ask your GP or other relevant health professional.

### What is an incisional hernia?

Any operation on your abdomen needs a cut that is closed with stitches. Sometimes your wound does not heal properly and a weakness happens in the muscle layer. This results in the contents of your abdomen, along with the inner layer, pushing through your abdominal muscles. This produces a lump under your skin called a hernia.



### What are the benefits of surgery?

You should no longer have the hernia. Surgery should prevent serious complications and allow you to return to normal activities.

### Are there any alternatives to surgery?

You can sometimes control the hernia with supportive clothing or simply leave it alone. It will not get better without surgery.

### What does the operation involve?

Various anaesthetic techniques are possible.

The operation usually takes about 90 minutes. Your surgeon will make a cut through your old scar. They will repair the weak tissue either with stitches only or using a synthetic mesh, which they will stitch to the muscles under your skin.

Your surgeon will close your skin over the repair. They may need to form a flap of skin over the repair so that your skin closes properly.

### What complications can happen?

Some complications can be serious and can even cause death.

#### General complications of any operation

- pain
- infection of the surgical site (wound)
- bleeding
- unsightly scarring of your skin
- blood clot in your leg
- blood clot in your lung

#### Specific complications of this operation

- developing a collection of blood (haematoma) or fluid (seroma) under your wound
- difficulty passing urine
- skin necrosis, where some of the skin flap dies
- injury to your bowel
- damage to nerves
- removing your umbilicus (belly button)

### How soon will I recover?

You should be able to go home after 1 to 4 days.

Increase how much you walk around over the first few days.

Your doctor will tell you when you can return to work.

Regular exercise should help you to return to normal activities as soon as possible. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

Most people make a full recovery and can return to normal activities. However, the hernia can come back.

## Summary

An incisional hernia is a weakness in your abdominal wall which happens when previous wounds do not heal properly. If left untreated, an incisional hernia can cause serious complications.

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