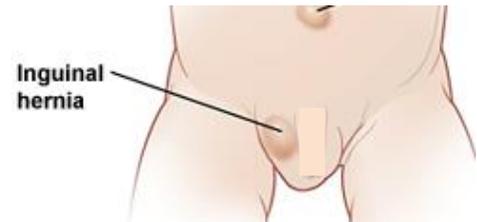


## Inguinal Hernia (Groin hernia)

### What is an inguinal hernia?

An inguinal hernia happens when a sac pushes through spaces in the muscle of the groin. It is under the skin. The sac often closes before birth. If it does not close before birth, the sac lets fluid and intestines move into the groin or scrotum. These hernias are common in children. They happen more often in boys and premature infants. Surgery is needed to fix an inguinal hernia.



### How does it affect my child?

Hernias can be seen as a bulge under the skin. In girls, it will be in the groin. In boys it will be in the groin or scrotum. The bulge may happen when your child cries, strains or stands. Most often it goes away when your child relaxes. Sometimes the hernia will stay out all of the time. Your doctor may show you how to push it back in so it does not stick out. This is called reducing the hernia. **Do not try this unless your doctor shows you how to do it.**

Sometimes an inguinal hernia will get stuck. Call your doctor right away if your child has:

- Sudden, severe pain in the lower stomach or groin.
- A hard, tender lump in the groin that does not move or change.
- Skin in the groin or scrotum that looks red.
- Upset belly or throwing up with pain or swelling in the groin.

### What do I need to know before my child's surgery?

A nurse will call you 1 to 3 days before your child's surgery. The nurse will go over what to do before surgery. The nurse will also tell you when your child must stop eating and drinking. **It is very important to follow these instructions. Surgery will be canceled if they are not followed. This is for your child's health.**

Call your child's doctor, nurse or clinic if your child has any of these problems before the surgery.

- A hernia that gets hard, tender, or does not go back in when your child relaxes.
- Pain or throwing up.
- A fever over 101°F (38.5°C).
- A bad diaper rash.
- Coughing or runny nose 2 days before surgery.
- Other questions or concerns.

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## What can I expect after surgery?

Most children can go home after surgery. Before going home, your child will need to:

- Take enough fluids.
- Feel comfortable or be easily comforted.

Some children will need to stay in the hospital for 12 hours or longer after surgery.

- Premature babies.
- Infants under 3 months old.
- Children with other health care health issues may need to stay longer as well.

Your child will be watched for breathing problems while they sleep. An overnight stay may be needed. The nurses will use a monitor to check your child's breathing. The surgeon and anesthesiologist will talk about this with you.

## What do I need to know to care for my child after surgery?

### Pain

Most children have only a little bit of pain after surgery. Pain medicine can be used to help. Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) should be used for small babies. Infants over 6 months of age can also have Ibuprofen (Motrin®). Holding and feeding your baby may also help.

Older children may get a prescription pain medicine from the surgeon. Most children only need pain medicine for the first 1 to 3 days after surgery. With the pain medicine, most children are able to walk and play without much pain.

### Diet

Start by giving your child small amounts of clear fluids like apple juice or Pedialyte®. Once clear liquids are taken without throwing up, start giving your child their normal fluids and foods.

### Wound care

Your child's surgeon will talk with you about your child's dressing and how to care for it.

### Activity

Most children can return to their normal activities in 3 to 4 days. Your child's surgeon will talk with you about bathing or activity limits after surgery.

### Follow-up care:

Your health care team will want to see your child in the surgery clinic one month after surgery. We will help you set up this visit.

**ALERT:** Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any concerns or if your child has:

- More than a small amount of bleeding, swelling, pain, or redness around the wound.
- Bad smelling fluid or pus draining from the wound.
- Fever over 101.5°F (38.5°C) within 3 days of surgery.
- Has special health care needs not covered by this information.

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**This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.**