Inspected and rated Outstanding

Care Quality Commission

Your Open Hernia Repair

Under General Anaesthetic

Please read this information leaflet carefully

INDEPENDENT HEALTH GROUP

ihg.org.uk

Your open hernia repair

What happens, and what you need to do, from now until you are recovering at home. You will be asleep for your operation. You will not feel pain or be aware of it.

Your confirmation letter gives your date, place and admission time. Your admission time is not your operation time. You may have to wait after you arrive.

Your journey at a glance

1. **Your assessment -** weeks before
   Fill in your health questionnaire fully. Answer promptly if we call you.

2. **Getting yourself ready -** starting now
   Get clear instructions about your medicines. Book a responsible adult to take you home and stay with you.

3. **The day before and the morning**
   Follow the eating and drinking times in your letter. No alcohol for 24 hours before.

4. **Arriving at hospital**
   Tell the team and your anaesthetist about allergies and past anaesthetic problems, even if you have already.

5. **Your operation**
   You will be asleep, usually for no more than about an hour.

6. **Waking up and going home**
   Most people go home the same day, with their responsible adult.

7. **Recovering at home**
   For at least 24 hours: no driving, no alcohol and no important decisions.

1 Your assessment

Weeks before your operation

Several people check that you are ready for a safe operation. Some of this happens without you being there.

Step	What you do	What we do
Health questionnaire (online)	Answer every question fully, including medicines, supplements, allergies and past anaesthetics. Ask us if you need help or another format.	Use your answers to plan your care.
Surgical clinic	Ask any questions. Decide whether you want to go ahead.	The surgeon examines your hernia and explains the operation, its benefits, risks and alternatives. Whilst they review your health and discuss your treatment options, this includes patient choice of where you receive treatment.
Anaesthetic review	Nothing. You do not need to be there.	An anaesthetist reviews your records and decides if you need tests, more checks or medicine instructions.
Wellness check	Answer promptly if we contact you.	The Pre-operative Team may call you, arrange tests, or contact your GP or a specialist.

Please note: if we cannot get the information we need to plan your care safely, your operation may be delayed.

2 Getting yourself ready
Starting now

Small changes now can help you recover and lower the risk of problems.

✔Keep diabetes, asthma, blood pressure or anaemia well controlled.

✔See your GP if a condition is not well controlled.

✔Stay as active as you normally can.

✔Eat a varied, balanced diet.

✔Stop smoking or cut down, and cut down on alcohol.

✔Tell us about loose teeth or dental problems.

2 Getting yourself ready
Your medicines

Bring a list of everything you take

Include prescribed medicines, inhalers and sprays, injections, anything bought from a pharmacy, shop or online, and vitamins, supplements and herbal remedies. If we ask you to, bring your medicines in their original packs.

Take only the medicines we have told you to take.

Take them with a small sip of water.

Do not stop a prescribed medicine unless we tell you to.

Make sure you have clear instructions if you take:

- blood thinners or antiplatelets, such as
- warfarin, apixaban, rivaroxaban, edoxaban,
- dabigatran, clopidogrel or aspirin
- diabetes medicines, including insulin
- weight-loss medicines
- heart or blood pressure medicines
- water tablets
- steroids
- herbal or complementary medicines, as we advise to stop these

No clear instructions yet? Call us on 0333 0100 362 before your operation.

Tell us about any medicine you take for diabetes or weight loss

Do you take Ozempic, Wegovy, Mounjaro or a similar medicine?

These GLP-1 and GLP-1/GIP medicines are used for diabetes or weight loss. Others include Rybelsus, Trulicity, Saxenda and Victoza. They can slow down how quickly your stomach empties.

Keep taking it unless we tell you to stop.
Do not skip, delay or change a dose on your own. Stopping can cause other problems, such as poor blood sugar control.

Tell us:

- its name and dose, and why you take it
- whether you take it daily or weekly
- when you last took it
- how long you have taken it, and any recent dose increase
- any side effects

Call us before you come in if you have:

- sickness or vomiting
- tummy pain, bloating or swelling
- severe constipation
- bad indigestion or reflux
- feeling full very quickly
- trouble eating, or keeping food or drink down

These can mean food is staying in your stomach for longer, which makes an anaesthetic less safe. We may change the plan or, occasionally, postpone your operation.

2 Getting yourself ready
Tell us, and plan ahead

Allergies and past anaesthetics: tell us before the day if:

- you have any allergy, or have reacted to a medicine, dressing, plaster, latex or antiseptic
- you have had problems during or after an anaesthetic, including severe sickness
- you were told it was difficult to put in your breathing tube, or had trouble with an airway device
- you or a close relative had a serious reaction to an anaesthetic
- you have been told you may have malignant hyperthermia or suxamethonium apnoea
- you have loose teeth, crowns, bridges, dentures or implants

Bring any allergy card, medical alert card or letters about past anaesthetic problems. **Tell us again on the day,** even if it is on your questionnaire.

Book your responsible adult now

You need an adult who can collect you, travel home with you and stay with you for the first 24 hours, and who can get help if you become unwell. You can go home by car or taxi with them.

You cannot drive, travel alone in a taxi or use public transport alone. Arrange care for children, dependent adults and pets.

Without a responsible adult, your operation may have to be postponed.

My responsible adult: _____ Phone: _____

Call us before your admission date if

- your health changes, or you become unwell
- your medicines change, or you start a new medicine, injection or supplement
- you get a cough, cold, fever or chest infection
- you have vomiting or diarrhoea
- you are taking antibiotics for an infection
- you get an open wound, rash or skin infection
- you go to hospital or start a significant new treatment
- you think you may be pregnant
- you cannot follow the fasting instructions
- you cannot arrange a responsible adult
- anything you told us may be incomplete or has changed

Calling us does not automatically mean your operation will be cancelled. It lets us advise you safely.

Pre and Post-operative Team **0333 0100 362**

3 Eating, drinking and getting ready

The day before and the morning

Copy your times from your confirmation letter:

Surgery time: _____

Last food: _____

Last clear drink: _____

Until 6 hours before	6 to 2 hours before	Last 2 hours	Surgery time
Eat and drink as normal. No alcohol in the 24 hours before.	No food, sweets, mints or chewing gum. Clear drinks only.	Nothing to eat or drink.	

These are the usual times, counted back from your surgery time (not your admission time). If your letter or the team gives different times, follow those. Unsure? Call us before the day.

Clear, still drinks only
Water, black tea or black coffee (no milk).

Not allowed
Milk or milky drinks, smoothies, fruit juice with bits, alcohol.

Why an empty stomach?
An anaesthetic reduces your body's normal protective reflexes. Food or drink could come back up into your lungs. This is uncommon but can cause serious breathing problems or a lung infection. If you have not followed the times, your operation may be delayed or cancelled.

Alcohol and smoking: no alcohol for 24 hours before your operation. No smoking or vaping on the day, or for at least 24 hours afterwards. If you drink alcohol heavily or may find it difficult to avoid alcohol before your operation, please tell us It matters for your safety and we will treat it sensitively.

On the morning

- Take only the medicines you were told to, with a sip of water.
- Have a bath or shower.
- Wear clean, loose, comfortable clothes.
- Where you can, remove make-up, nail varnish, false nails, jewellery and piercings.
- Leave valuables at home.

Pack your bag

- [ ] Confirmation letter and paperwork
- [ ] Up-to-date list of your medicines
- [ ] Inhalers, sprays or emergency medicines
- [ ] Allergy or medical alert card
- [ ] Dressing gown and slippers, if asked

4 Arriving at hospital

On the day

Arrive at the time in your letter. The team will:

- check who you are and which operation you are having
- do nursing checks
- check when you last ate and drank
- go through your medicines and allergies
- get you ready for theatre

You will meet your anaesthetist. They will:

- go over your health, medicines, allergies and past anaesthetics
- explain your anaesthetic, pain relief and antisickness medicine
- talk about the risks that apply to you answer your questions
- make the final decision about going ahead that day

Expect to wait. Operating list times can change, so your operation may not start soon after you arrive.

Tell them again about allergies, past anaesthetic problems and loose or crowned teeth, even if you have told someone already.

5 Your anaesthetic and operation
In theatre

What is a general anaesthetic?
Medicines that put you into a controlled, deep sleep. You will not feel pain or know what is happening while the surgeon operates. Your anaesthetist is responsible for you throughout.

How does it start?
Monitors check your heart rate, blood pressure and oxygen level. The medicine usually goes in through a cannula (a thin plastic tube) in your hand or arm. Sometimes you breathe a gas through a mask instead. You fall asleep quickly.

What happens while I am asleep?
A breathing tube or similar device supports your breathing. Your anaesthetist watches your heart, blood pressure, breathing and oxygen, and gives fluids, pain relief and antisickness medicine. You may have local anaesthetic around the wound to ease pain afterwards.

How long will I be asleep?
Usually no more than about an hour. It can be longer if needed to finish safely. You will be in the theatre area for longer than this, for preparation, checks and moving you to recovery.

6 Waking up and going home
After your operation

FIRST
You wake up
In theatre or in recovery. You may have an oxygen mask.

THEN
Recovery checks
Breathing, oxygen, pulse, blood pressure and wound. Tell us about pain or sickness.

THEN
A drink and a snack
Once you are awake enough and it is safe.

FINALLY
Ward, then home
When the team says it is safe. Sometimes an overnight stay is needed.

Going home: with your responsible adult, by car or taxi together. Never drive yourself, travel alone in a taxi or use public transport alone.

7 The first 24 hours
Recovering at home

The anaesthetic can affect your judgement, coordination, concentration, memory and reactions for a while. You may feel tired or dizzy for 24 to 48 hours.

✓ Do

- have your responsible adult with you
- rest when you need to
- move gently around your home. You do not need to stay in bed.
- drink regularly
- if you feel sick, start with small drinks and light food, then build up
- take your medicines as instructed
- follow the wound care and activity advice you are given

✗ Do not, for at least 24 hours

- drive or cycle
- use machinery, tools or dangerous appliances
- cook with sharp or hot equipment
- drink alcohol, smoke, vape or take recreational drugs
- take sleeping tablets or other sedating medicines, unless advised
- look after children or dependent adults on your own
- sign important documents or make legal or financial decisions

Keep avoiding anything that would be unsafe for as long as the anaesthetic, pain or your medicines still affect you, even after 24 hours.

7 The next few days
Recovering at home

Pain relief

Soreness, pulling or tightness around the wound is expected. Taking pain relief regularly for the first few days usually works better than waiting until the pain is bad. Cut down as it eases.

- read the label and follow the dose
- check the most you can take in a day
- only take one medicine that contains paracetamol

Stronger painkillers can cause drowsiness, sickness, constipation and poor concentration.

Avoiding constipation

Once you are eating and drinking, have plenty of fluids and foods with fibre, and move around gently. If constipation becomes a problem, ask a pharmacist or the team.

When can I drive?

Not for at least 24 hours, and often longer after a hernia repair. Wait until you can tick all of these:

- The anaesthetic and any drowsy medicines have worn off
- Pain does not distract you
- You can sit comfortably and wear a seat belt
- You can look around properly and use all the controls
- **You can do an emergency stop without pain or hesitation**

Check your car insurance policy, and follow your surgeon's advice if it is longer.

Common side effects (short-lived)

- thirst or a dry mouth
- drowsiness or dizziness
- feeling or being sick
- shivering
- sore or hoarse throat
- bruising or soreness where the cannula was
- aching muscles
- poor concentration, confusion or memory problems

Most settle within hours; some last a few days. Confusion is more likely in older people and people with memory problems, and occasionally lasts longer. Tell the team: treatment can help.

Rare but serious risks

Modern anaesthesia is very safe, but rare complications include:

- damage to teeth, lips or mouth
- breathing problems or a chest infection
- a serious allergic reaction
- eye or nerve injury
- heart or circulation problems
- stomach contents getting into the lungs
- longer-lasting confusion
- being aware during the anaesthetic

Your risk depends on your age, health, medicines, weight, smoking and past anaesthetics. Your anaesthetist will discuss the risks that apply to you.

See how likely each risk is in the Royal College of Anaesthetists' risk leaflets and infographics: rcoa.ac.uk/patients

If you are worried after your operation

Call the Pre and Post-operative Team first **0333 0100 362**

For anything about your operation, anaesthetic, pain or sickness, wound or dressing, medicines or recovery. Out of hours, your call goes to our out-of-hours provider. Until 9.30pm on the day of surgery they can contact your surgeon. Later calls are passed to the team the next morning.

999
Call now

- severe difficulty breathing
- chest pain
- collapse or passing out
- coughing up blood
- severe bleeding that does not stop with firm pressure
- any other life-threatening symptom

Call us today
During our office hours 8am - 5pm
or
or NHS 111 if it cannot wait until morning

- repeated vomiting, or you cannot keep fluids down
- pain getting worse despite pain relief
- wound becoming red, hot or more swollen
- pus or a bad-smelling discharge from the wound
- fever or feeling very unwell
- wound that keeps bleeding
- difficulty passing urine
- tummy swelling that is getting bigger
- painful or fast-growing swelling near the operation
- calf pain or swelling in one leg

Expected
should settle on its own

- soreness, pulling or tightness around the wound
- tiredness or dizziness for 1 to 2 days
- a sore throat for a few days
- bruising where the cannula was

Not sure which applies? Call us. It is always fine to ask.

Feedback or Complaints

At Independent Health Group, we strive to provide a service that meets the expectations of all our patients. We recognise that, on occasion, patients may wish to raise concerns about the care or service they have received.

If you would like to make a complaint or raise a concern in person, please speak to any member of staff.

If your concern cannot be resolved immediately, we will follow our formal complaints procedure and provide you with a written response.

Please make your complaint to:

Head of Quality and Governance
Independent Health Group
8 The Office Village
Bath Business Park
Peasedown St. John
BA2 8SG

Email: inhg.qandg@nhs.net
Tel: 0333 0100 362

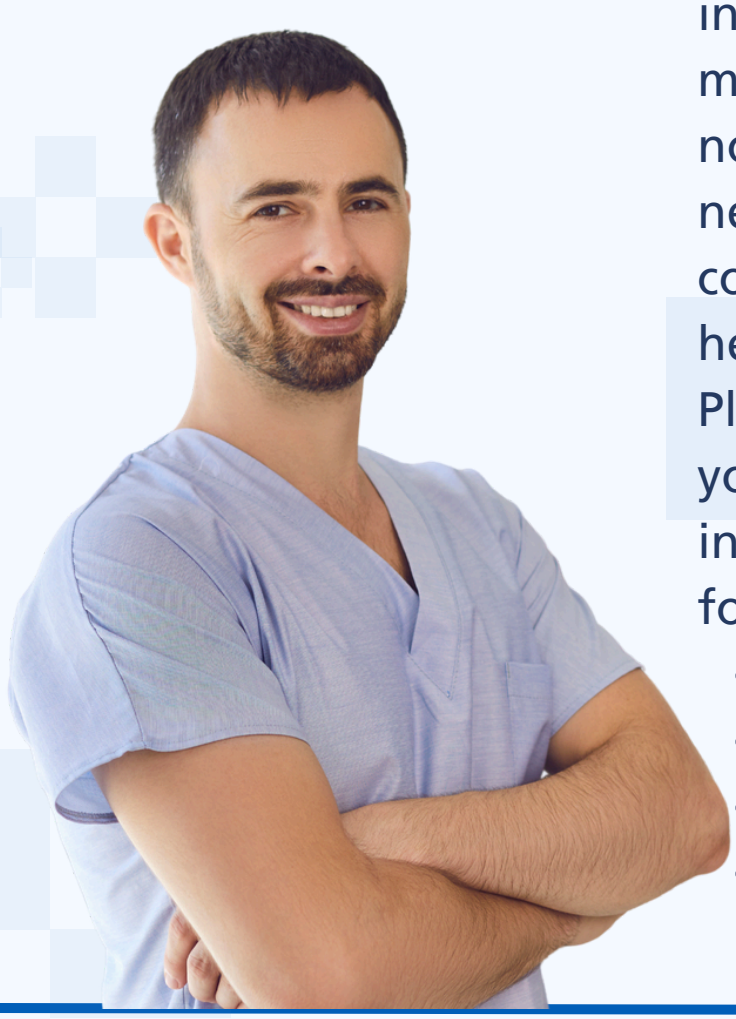
A full copy of the Independent Health Group Management of Complaints and Concerns Policy is available on request from the Head of Quality and Governance.

Contact Details

For general enquiries you can call us on 0333 0100 362
Monday to Friday, 8am–5pm.
Alternatively, you can complete our online enquiries form and a member of our team will be in touch.

Further Information

NHS Website
This website has lots of useful information about hernias.
Website: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hernia/



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Please also let us know if you would like this information in another format. Such as:

- Easy Read
- Large Print
- Audio
- Another Language