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CareQuality Commission

Mesh and Your Hernia Repair

Patient Information

Please read this information leaflet carefully

INDEPENDENT HEALTH GROUP

ihg.org.uk

This leaflet contains information that we believe may be helpful for you. However, what is important to one person may be different for another, and you may have questions about how the information applies to you. Please ask us as many questions as you need – we are here to help.

Introduction

In addition to discussions with your surgeon, this information sheet has been prepared to help you decide which treatment option is right for you.

What are my options?

Not all hernias require an operation, although most will eventually need treatment as they tend to get larger over time and may cause increasing symptoms.

Non-surgical options

''Watchful waiting'' is an option for patients whose hernia causes only minimal symptoms. The presence of a hernia should not, by itself, limit your ability to carry out your usual daily activities, including exercise.

Surgical options

Repairing a hernia involves an operation. There are two main techniques:

1. Non-mesh repair: This involves closing the defect (hole) in the abdominal wall using stitches. This creates a degree of tension within the repair.
2. Mesh repair: This involves using a surgical mesh to reinforce the repair and provide additional support to the abdominal wall.

Hernia repairs can be performed using either open surgery or laparoscopic (keyhole) surgery. The most appropriate technique for you will be discussed with you by your surgeon.

Surgical mesh, regulations and safety

The use of mesh to repair most hernias has been the preferred method in the UK and worldwide for more than 25 years. A large amount of data is available on the outcomes of different hernia repair techniques and the various types of mesh used in surgery. Indeed, when surgeons themselves require hernia repair, many choose a mesh-based repair.

Meshes used in surgery are subject to strict regulation and must carry a CE mark before they can be used in patients within the European Union. Patient safety is a key component of this regulatory process, and compliance is regularly reviewed by the relevant regulatory authorities.

Is mesh repair the gold standard?

Many patients who develop a hernia have an underlying weakness in the tissues of the abdominal wall, which may not hold stitches as effectively. This helps explain why repairs using stitches alone have a higher risk of the hernia returning compared with repairs reinforced with mesh.

For most patients, mesh does not result in any significant additional risk. Because mesh repairs are associated with lower recurrence rates, the use of mesh has become the standard approach for many types of hernia repair.

Are there disadvantages to a mesh repair?

Mesh is a synthetic material that remains in the body permanently, similar to other implants such as dentures, dental crowns, joint replacements, or heart valves.

As with any implanted material, there is a small risk that the mesh could become infected. However, this is uncommon.

A small number of patients may develop chronic pain following hernia surgery. There is no clear evidence that mesh itself is the cause of most chronic pain after hernia repair, and chronic pain can also occur following non-mesh repairs.

Summary

For most patients, mesh is a safe and reliable way to repair a hernia. Millions of hernia repairs have been successfully performed using mesh worldwide.

Alternative repair techniques are available and will be discussed with you to help you make an informed decision about your treatment.

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: 03330 100 362

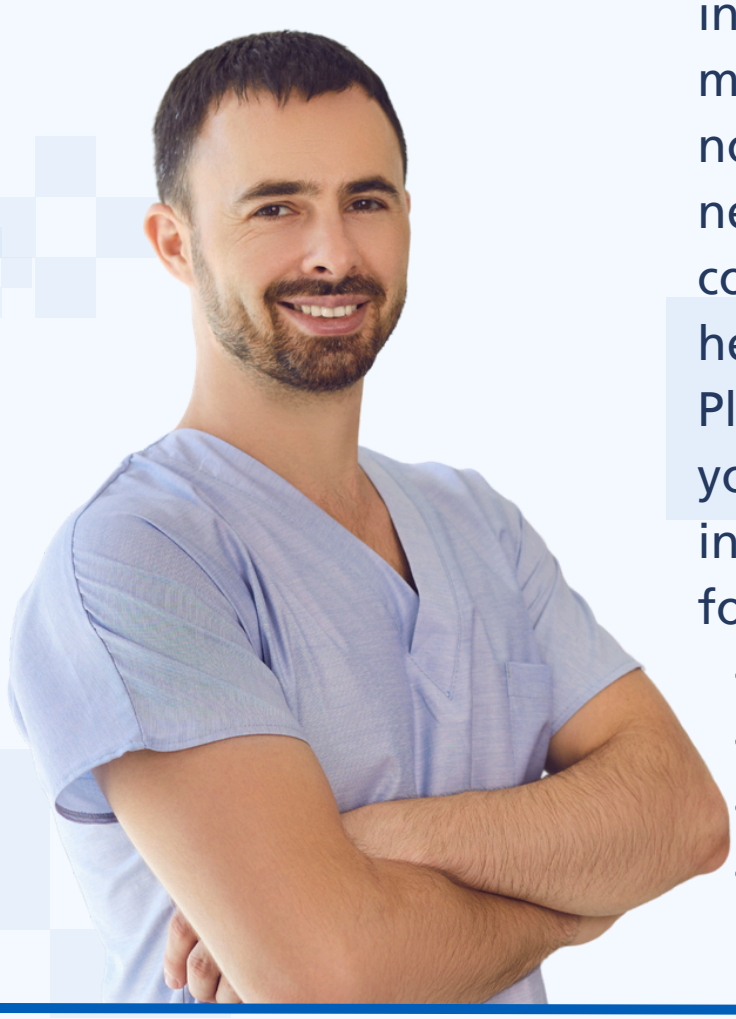
A full copy of the Independent Health Group Management of Complaints and Concerns Policy is available on request from the Head of Quality and Governance.

Contact Details

For general enquiries you can call us on 03330 100362
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/



We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please contact us, we are happy to help.
Please also let us know if you would like this information in another format. Such as:

- Easy Read
- Large Print
- Audio
- Another Language