

Inguinal Hernia

Take your child to the Emergency Department NOW if:

Your child has an inguinal hernia and has **not** had surgery and:

- You are not able to push the hernia back in through the hole.
- Is in a lot of pain.
- Is feeling sick to his or her stomach or is vomiting.
- Your child's stomach is distended (swollen and firm).

Note: If your child has any of the symptoms listed above, he or she may need to have surgery right away.

Call the Surgery Team night or day if your child has any of the following symptoms:

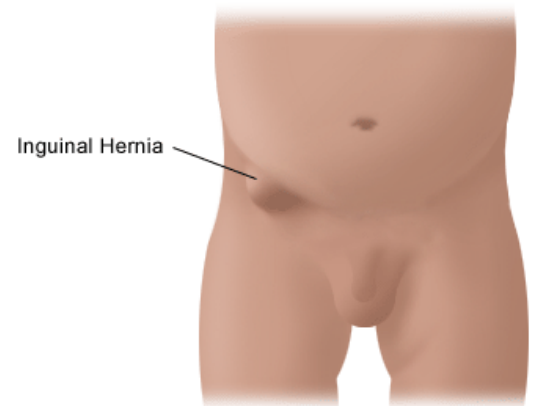
- Has any bleeding the day after surgery.
- Is not urinating at least every 8 hours.
- Has pain that is not relieved with pain medicine.
- Cries uncontrollably for more than an hour.
- Is vomiting the day after surgery.
- Has a temperature higher than 101°F (38.3°C).
- Has increasing swelling, redness, or pain at incision site or the area around it.
- Has pus (yellow-green, foul smelling drainage coming from the incision).

Note: Call the General Surgery Office 314.454.6022 during office hours. If after hours (nights, weekends, and holidays) call 314.454.6000 and ask for the Surgery Resident on-call to be paged.

An inguinal hernia is a small hole in the abdominal (stomach) wall which is present since birth. The small bowel, cecum, ovary and fallopian tube or appendix can slip through that hole. The contents can then go into the groin or scrotum.

An inguinal hernia should be repaired soon after it is found. If your baby was premature (born early), surgery will not be done right away.

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It is likely that surgery will not be done until around 20 weeks **after your baby was due** to be born. This may depend on the surgeon. The hernia needs to be repaired right away if a loop of intestine or an ovary gets stuck in the hole.

What to Expect Before Surgery

- No testing is needed.
- One day before surgery, you will be told what time to bring your child in for surgery.
- Your child will not be able to eat or drink before surgery. We call this being NPO. You will be told what time to stop giving your child food or drink.

What to Expect During and Shortly After Surgery

- The surgery will take about 60 minutes.
- In babies, sometimes the side opposite of the hernia is looked at during surgery to make sure there is not a second hernia. If there is a hernia on that side as well, it will be fixed while your baby is already in surgery. This is more common in premature babies.
- Your child will have the hernia fixed under anesthesia which means he or she is asleep and does not feel any pain.
- After surgery your child will go to the recovery room. Once your child stable you will be able to go and be with your child.
- Once your child is fully awake and tolerating food and drink, he or she will be allowed to go home.
- The average amount of time in the recovery room is 1 to 2 hours.

What to Expect at Home After the Surgery

- Your child may not be very active after the surgery (the day of surgery).
- Nausea and vomiting should be gone by 24 hours after the surgery.
- The incision area may be swollen and bruised for a few days.

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Things You Can Do to Help Your Child

- Your child may have acetaminophen (Tylenol®) as needed for pain.
- Your child can go back to school or day care 2 days after the surgery. **Limit all activity**, including running, riding a bike and playing sports for 2-4 weeks.

Care for the Incision

- The stitches will dissolve in one or two weeks.
- If your child is toilet trained, steri-strips (small pieces of tape) should stay over the incision for 7 to 10 days. After 10 days, you may take these off if they have not already fallen off.
- If your child is not toilet trained, a waterproof dressing will be covering the incision. You will remove this dressing in 3 to 5 days. There will be steri-strips underneath.
- A sponge bath or shower is recommended for the first 10 days. **The incision site should not soak in water for the first 7 to 10 days. This means, no tub bath, jacuzzis, or swimming in a body of water (pool, lake, stream, pond, or ocean) for 7 to 10 days.**

For General Health Information and Resources:

Call or visit the [Family Resource Center](#), a health information library on the 3rd floor of the hospital. Call 314.454.2350, email at frc@bjc.org, or check out the FREE [St. Louis Children's Hospital Kid Care App](#).

