

What is a groin hernia repair?

Groin hernia repair is surgery to return or push back a lump of fatty tissue or loop of bowel back in the patients tummy (abdomen) or groin. There are many different types of hernia; this information sheet relates to groin (inguinal) hernias only.

Groin hernias occur when fatty tissue or a part of the patients bowel pokes through into the groin at the top of the patients inner thigh. This is the most common type of hernia and it mainly affects men. It is often associated with ageing and repeated strain on the abdomen. Patients may experience pain or discomfort that can limit their daily activities. Hernias can also present as a surgical emergency should the bowel strangulate or become obstructed due to the hernia.

Patient eligibility criteria:

Groin hernia repair is restricted to patients that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- when fatty tissue or a part of the patients bowel **pokes through into the patients groin** at the top of the inner thigh (inguinal hernia) except for patient that that have minimal symptoms
- not able to reduce (irreducible) and partially reducible inguinal hernias
- **all patients with suspected strangulated or obstructed hernia should be referred as an emergency**
- pain or discomfort that limits daily activities.

All women and children less than 18 years of age with inguinal hernias should be referred to an appropriate surgical provider for further assessment.

The clinician in charge of the care of the patient's specific condition, usually a hospital doctor, can assist the application, if there is exceptional clinical need for the treatment to be funded. The patient's clinician must evidence clinical exceptionality and must be supported by the patient's local NHS commissioning organisation. See separate leaflet for more information on Individual Funding Requests (IFRs).

Advice and further guidance:

There are two main ways surgery for hernias can be carried out. The first is **OPEN SURGERY**, where one cut is made allowing the surgeon to push the lump back into the tummy and **KEYHOLE (LAPAROSCOPIC) SURGERY**, a less invasive, but a more difficult technique where several smaller cuts are made allowing the surgeon to use various instruments to repair the hernia.

For more information search for 'inguinal hernia repair' at www.nhs.uk

Or to read the 'inguinal hernia decision aid' visit sdm.rightcare.nhs.uk

Treatment policy for patients covered by NHS Solihull, Birmingham CrossCity and Birmingham South Central Clinical Commissioning Groups.