

## Care After Surgery

The length of your recovery will depend on the severity of your condition, the type of hernia you have and the method of repair your surgeon chooses, in addition to your general health. Many hernia repairs are performed on an outpatient basis, meaning that you will return home the same day of your surgery.

Ask your doctor for specific postsurgical care instructions. Some of these might include:

- Engage in light activity the following day (standing, walking) and gradually increase activity level.
- At first, avoid lifting and sexual activity that might strain your incision.
- Take prescribed pain medication to relieve discomfort.
- You may need a urinary catheter (a tube to assist in urination) for a short while after surgery.
- Call your doctor if you experience high fever, bleeding, vomiting, severe bowel problems (diarrhea or constipation), redness or draining around surgical site, severe pain, or trouble urinating.
- Schedule a follow-up visit with your surgeon 2-3 weeks after the surgery.
- Ask your doctor when it will be safe to return to work. It may be 2-6 weeks depending on the type of job you have and the surgical procedure.

After your recovery, it is important to make some lifestyle changes to avoid a recurrence of your hernia or development of a new hernia.

- Be careful with heavy lifting or strenuous activity and learn proper lifting techniques.
- Adjust your diet to avoid constipation and straining during bowel movements (for example, eat more fiber).
- Control coughing and sneezing (for example, quit smoking or treat allergies that cause you to cough or sneeze).
- Avoid exercises that strain abdominal muscles.
- Lose weight to relieve stress on abdominal muscles.