

General Surgery – Hernia Repair

Introduction

The COVID pandemic has had a significant impact on the NHS ability to provide routine elective services. We recognise that patients are waiting longer than we would all like and it is not always possible to identify when treatment will take place. This document provides you with information on how you can support yourself while waiting to attend the hospital.

Guidance for Patients

While you are waiting for your hernia operation, you should remain as active as possible. Most patients find that their hernia may become more tender on heavier lifting or straining. Whilst you should learn which particular movements cause you discomfort and avoid them, it is important that you remain as active as possible and try to take some regular exercise. If lifting heavy objects causes you discomfort, you may need to ask for help or perhaps request lighter duties at work, if your job is manual. If you are able to massage your hernia back inside, you may find that wearing a truss will help and this should be applied first thing in the morning when the hernia is inside. Alternatively, tight fitting underwear can provide useful additional support.

If you are overweight, most hernia symptoms will improve with weight loss, as the pressure behind the hernia is reduced. Some patients find that if they lose significant weight whilst waiting for their surgery, their hernia symptoms disappear and if this happens you should contact your team for a review, as you may be able to avoid surgery all together. If you are a current smoker, stopping smoking will help with symptoms like chronic cough, which will make your hernia worse and has wider benefits to your health. Likewise, you should make sure that any other medical conditions such as high blood pressure or asthma are as well controlled as possible, so that they do not cause delays when your appointment for surgery is available.

Occasionally, hernias can be complicated by something called strangulation. This is when the contents of the hernia gets stuck, swells and their blood supply is reduced. If your hernia suddenly becomes very tender or painful and is hard, you should try to lie quietly, take some painkillers such as paracetamol and let your muscles relax as much as possible. Your hernia should soften, and the pain should reduce. Often you will be able to gently massage it back inside. If the pain does not subside and the hernia remains hard or if you develop vomiting, you should attend the Emergency Department for further advice.

To support our local residents to stop smoking or lose weight, the following services are available to provide free stop smoking and weight management support to our community.

Call: Andover War Memorial Hospital - 01962 863 535

Basingstoke and North Hampshire Hospital - 01256 473 202

Royal County Hampshire Hospital - 01962 863 535

Email: myplannedcare@hhft.nhs.uk

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Website: www.hampshirehospitals.nhs.uk

Health Lifestyles – We are here to help you and offer different levels of support to maintain a healthy weight and to stop smoking including telephone support, virtual and app-based support options.

Stop Smoking Service - <https://www.smokefreehampshire.co.uk/>. The stop smoking service provides a range of options to help you quit including support from an advisor, stop smoking medications, e-cigarettes and a digital offer for those who wish to quit by themselves.

If you are not ready to quit just yet but would like more information on how to protect your family, **Smoke Free Homes**, advises on how to make your home and car smoke free.

Weight Management Service - www.shapeup4lifehampshire.co.uk. The service supports adults aged 18 years or over who want to lose weight and have been identified as obese.

Find out your BMI

You can get help to lead a healthier lifestyle if you're an adult (18 years or over) living in Hampshire (but not Southampton or Portsmouth) and your body mass index (BMI) is above average. [Use the NHS calculator to find out your BMI](#). If it's too high, sign up for a programme that will help you lose weight.

BMI of 30+.

If your BMI is 30 or higher, you qualify for free support from [Shapeup4life Hampshire](#).

BMI of 28+

You can get free support from Shapeup4life Hampshire if you haven't paid to attend sessions with a commercial weight management provider in the last three months, and at least one of the following applies:

- you have Type 1 and 2 Diabetes or Metabolic Syndrome.
- you have problems with your heart, circulation, hypertension or high blood pressure.
- you have been diagnosed with anxiety/depression.
- you need to lose weight before receiving another medical treatment or surgery.
- you have a serious long-term health condition that is adversely affected by your weight such as muscular skeletal disorders (back pain, mobility issues) and asthma.
- you're from a black or ethnic minority background.

[Learn more and sign up with Shapeup4life Hampshire](#)

BMI of 25+

If you have a Body Mass Index of 25 or higher, [the NHS Weight Loss Plan](#) will help you start healthier eating habits, be more active, and start losing weight.

The [NHS 12 week fitness plan](#) will support your weight loss plan as well as improve your health. This is aimed at beginners and will help get you into the habit of regular exercise over the course of the

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programme. It is structured but flexible enough to allow you to fit the exercise sessions around your other weekly commitments.

Healthy eating and being active

Information and advice on healthy eating and becoming more active is available from:

- [One You Eat Better](#) (website) - includes Easy Meals app for healthy meals and the Change4Life Food Scanner to help reduce levels of sugar in your diet.
- [Better Health - Get Active](#) (website) - includes tips on getting active for all, including the downloadable Active 10 app, as well as tailored advice for those living with a long-term condition.
- [Sugar Smart](#) is a campaign to raise awareness of hidden sugars, recommended levels and healthy alternatives by encouraging individuals, groups, businesses, schools and organisation to join the campaign and make a pledge. To find out how you can join in, become sugar smart and make good choices about what you, your family, colleagues eat.

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If your condition suddenly worsens while you are waiting, you should seek advice.

Urgent Health Advice

For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it's not an emergency, please call 111 from any landline or mobile phone. You can also visit www.nhs.uk. The NHS 111 service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Life Threatening Emergencies

For something life threatening – severe bleeding, breathing difficulties or chest pains – please dial 999.

GP surgeries are still open

If you experience an increase in pain or a significant reduction in mobility, you should in the first instance contact your General Practitioner for review and advice.

GP surgeries are still open and are working differently to how they did before the COVID-19 pandemic. GP practices continue to make best use of telephone, online and video consultations. Face-to-face appointments are still being given to those who need it.

When you phone or use an online form to contact your GP surgery to make an appointment, you will be asked some questions which are designed to help staff guide you to the most appropriate clinical person to help you with your condition. This could be a nurse, clinical pharmacist, physician's associate, GP or paramedic.

A list of GP practices with relevant contact details are available on the following website:

<https://www.nhs.uk/Services/Trusts/GPs/DefaultView.aspx?id=163127>

Contact Us

Please direct any My Planned Care enquiries to myplannedcare@hhft.nhs.uk or 01962 825 616.

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