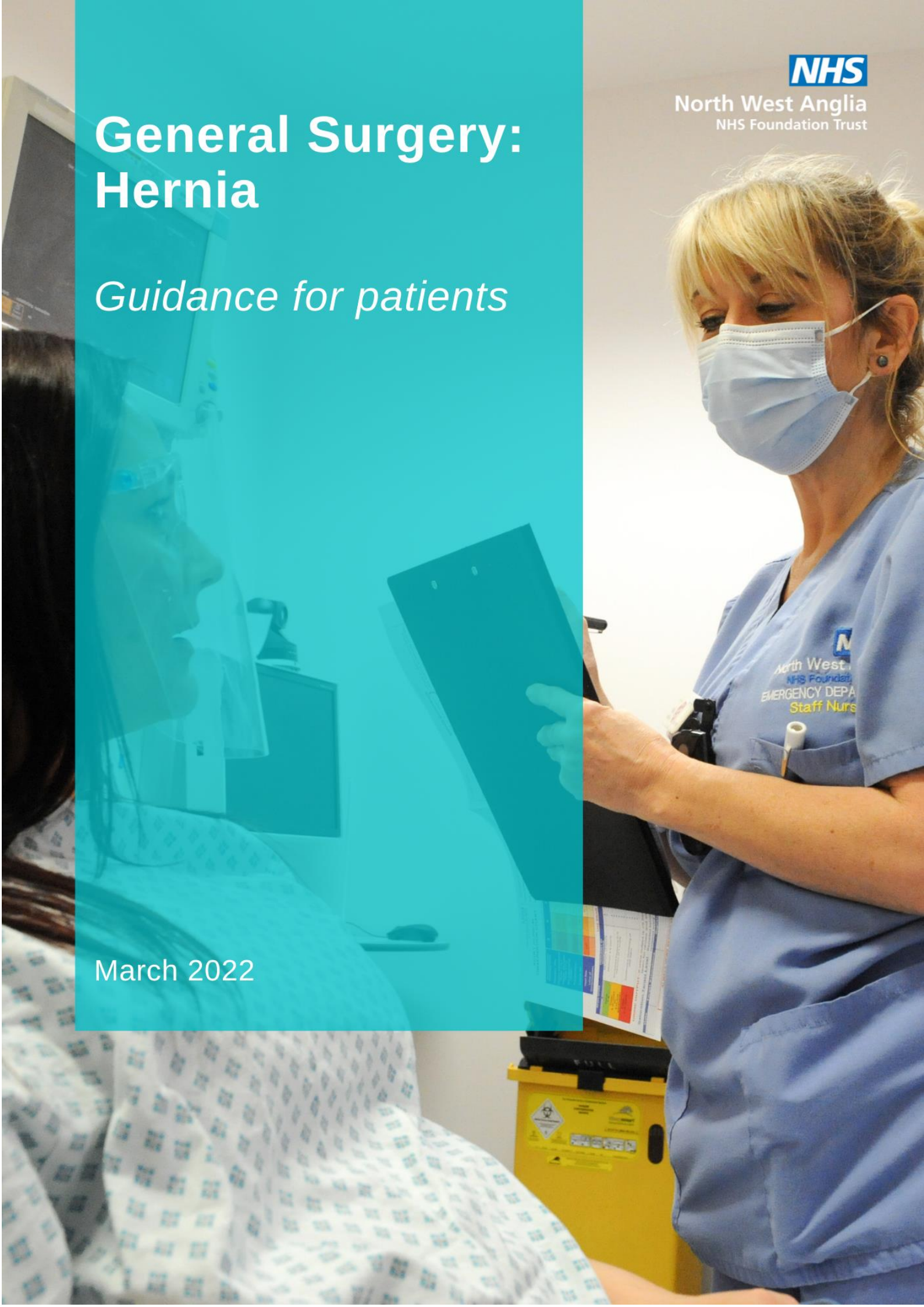


General Surgery: Hernia

Guidance for patients

March 2022



General Surgery (Hernia)

Introduction

General Surgery deal with the diagnosis and management of hernia related conditions that require surgical intervention. General Surgery involves the treatment of children, adolescents and adults, and the management of anxious and medically complex patients.

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. The guidance has been reviewed by clinicians who are responsible for your care.

Guidance for Patients

It is important that while you are waiting for your surgery you remain as active and as medically fit as possible but be aware of your hernia: If you do need to do anything strenuous, hold the area of your hernia for extra support. If you have any long-standing conditions such high blood pressure you should get this reviewed at your GP surgery to make sure it remains well controlled. This will also help prevent any unnecessary delays when you come for your pre-operative assessment. Maintaining a well-balanced diet is also important, as is reducing any excessive weight that may be impacting on your general health. If you are a current smoker, it would be advisable to seek support to help with stopping, advice can be found at your local pharmacy or GP surgery.

We here in the General Surgery Department at NWAFT want to help you manage your condition during these challenging times, when the delays to normal elective surgery mean you are not getting your surgery as quickly as we would like. There are some very useful websites that can help you to manage some of the symptoms you are experiencing and guidance regarding help and support that you may be able to access.

Age UK - <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/conditions-illnesses/arthritis/>

Age UK provides information on activities and exercise class held by local Age UK representatives. They also signpost to advice on healthy eating options and maintaining a healthy weight especially important if you are being considered for surgery, and some of the options available to get help in the home (<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/care/arranging-care/homecare/>)

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

Find out your BMI

You can get help to lead a healthier lifestyle. If it's too high, sign up for a programme that will help you lose 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 programme. It is structured but flexible enough to allow you to fit the exercise sessions around your other weekly commitments

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

You should go your nearest A&E straight away if you have a hernia and you develop any of the following symptoms:

- sudden, severe pain
- being sick
- difficulty pooing or passing wind
- the hernia becomes firm or tender, or cannot be pushed back in

These symptoms could mean that either:

- the blood supply to a section of organ or tissue trapped in the hernia has become cut off (strangulation)
- a piece of bowel has entered the hernia and become blocked (obstruction)A strangulated hernia and obstructed bowel are medical emergencies and need to be treated as soon as possible.

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, inability to weight bear on this limb 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.

Before you see your GP, it may be worth thinking of the questions that you could be asked to help make a diagnosis and decide how quickly you need treatment. Some standard questions are as follows:

- Where do you feel the pain?
- When and how did the pain start?
- Does anything make the pain worse?
- Does anything make the pain better?
- Can you walk and bear weight on it?
- Do you have any other medical problems?
- Do you take any medicines?

Contact Us

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