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In the month of August I discuss hernia repair surgery, a hernia occurs when an organ or fatty tissue squeezes through a weak spot in a surrounding muscle or connective tissue called fascia. The most common types of hernia are inguinal, incisional, femoral, umbilical and hiatal hernia.

## Hernia Surgery

A hernia occurs when an organ or fatty tissue squeezes through a weak spot in a surrounding muscle or connective tissue called fascia. The most common types of hernia are inguinal (inner groin), incisional (resulting from an incision), femoral (outer groin), umbilical (belly button), and hiatal (upper stomach).

In an inguinal hernia, the intestine or the bladder protrudes through the abdominal wall or into the inguinal canal in the groin.

In an incisional hernia, the intestine pushes through the abdominal wall at the site of previous abdominal surgery.

A femoral hernia occurs when the intestine enters the canal carrying the femoral artery into the upper thigh.

In an umbilical hernia, part of the small intestine passes through the abdominal wall near the navel.

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# Hernia Surgery

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## Causes of a hernia

Hernias are caused by a combination of pressure and an opening or weakness of muscle. An organ or tissue is forced through an opening or weak spot in muscle or fascia as a result of pressure. Muscle weakness can occur at birth or later in life. An increase in abdominal pressure can cause a hernia.

Obesity, poor nutrition, and smoking can all weaken the abdominal muscles and make hernias more likely. Activities like lifting heavy objects can also weaken the abdominal muscles. Diarrhea and constipation can also weaken the abdominal muscles.

## Diagnosis

A hernia diagnosis will be based on your history of symptoms, a physical exam and in some cases imaging tests will be done.



## Treatment

Hernias are treated by surgery, there are two types of surgeries that can be done to treat a hernia namely the open surgery and the laparoscopic surgery.

An open hernia repair involves making an incision in the groin to repair the hernia. Hernia "sac" containing bulging intestine is identified. Using stitches or synthetic mesh, the surgeon then pushes the hernia back into the abdomen. Within a few days after surgery, most patients can go home. During the first four to six weeks following surgery, you are not supposed to perform any strenuous activity or exercise.

Laparoscopic hernia repair involves inserting a thin, telescope-like instrument through a small incision at the umbilicus (belly button). This procedure is minimally invasive and recovery is quicker. During the procedure you will not feel any pain.

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