

GENERAL SURGERY

WWW.SPECIALISTGENERALSURGEON.CO.ZA



May 2025: Issue 5



Could That Groin Lump Be a Hernia? Here's What You Need to Know

Welcome to the May newsletter, as a general surgeon, I am committed to empowering patients with knowledge to navigate their healthcare journeys confidently. This month, we look at inguinal hernias.

What is an Inguinal Hernia?

An inguinal hernia happens when a part of your intestine or fatty tissue pushes through a weak spot in the lower abdominal wall, specifically in the inguinal canal a passage in the groin area. This is the most common type of hernia and affects men significantly more than women. Inguinal hernias can appear as a bulge in the groin or scrotum and may cause discomfort or pain, especially when coughing, bending over or lifting heavy objects. While some hernias may not cause symptoms, they do not go away on their own and may require surgical repair to prevent complications such as incarceration or strangulation of the intestine, which are medical emergencies.

General Surgery News

I pick a topic each month and discuss it in detail on my social media accounts.



Dr. Tendani Muthambi
Specialist General Surgeon



Common Symptoms

You might notice:

- A bulge in the groin, especially when standing or coughing
- A dull ache or burning sensation
- Heaviness in the groin
- Discomfort when lifting, bending, or coughing

In some cases, pain and swelling around the testicles (if the hernia descends into the scrotum)

What Causes It?

Inguinal hernias don't always come from a specific injury. Most are due to a combination of pressure and a pre-existing weakness in the abdominal wall. Common causes include:

- Heavy lifting
- Chronic coughing or sneezing
- Straining during bowel movements
- Pregnancy or weight gain
- Genetic predisposition
- Aging muscles

Important: If the bulge becomes hard, painful or can't be pushed back in, seek immediate medical attention. This could mean the hernia is strangulated, cutting off blood supply to the intestines a life-threatening emergency.

How is It Treated?



The only permanent fix for an inguinal hernia is surgery.

There are two main types of repair:

1. Open Hernia Repair (Herniorrhaphy):

A single incision is made in the groin, and the hernia is pushed back in. Mesh is often used to reinforce the area.

2. Laparoscopic Surgery:

Small incisions are made, and the surgeon uses a camera and instruments to repair the hernia internally often with quicker recovery and less post-op pain.

The type of surgery depends on the size of the hernia, the patient's health and surgeon preference.