

Exeter Vascular

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Laparoscopic (“Keyhole”) Hernia Repair

What is a “Keyhole” hernia repair?

In a keyhole repair, incisions are made away from the actual site of the hernia and the hernia is repaired from within using a camera and telescopic instruments.

The aim of hernia repair surgery is to safely define the neck of the hernia (the hole it pops through), reduce the hernia contents into the abdomen and close or cover the defect to prevent further hernias. This is done with mesh.

What should I expect?

You will be admitted to hospital on the day of your surgery and meet with both nursing staff, Mr Birchley and the anaesthetist. Your hernia(s) will be marked and you will be asked to sign a consent form.

Your operation will take place with you asleep in theatre. Afterwards you will return to the ward.

Hernia surgery is usually performed as a day-case (admission and discharge the same day). Occasionally an overnight stay is advised.

What anaesthetic is required for keyhole hernia repair?

Your hernia will be repaired under general anaesthetic (you will be asleep).

What are the advantages of keyhole hernia repair?

There are number of potential advantages to keyhole hernia repair:

- You do not need to dissect through delicate structures and so the risk of pain or nerve injury is lower.
- There is also less "Cutting" of tissue again making the procedure more comfortable.
- You can approach the hernia through "Clean" tissue and so the operation is particularly good for recurrent hernias.
- In women (where there is a greater incidence of different types of hernia), you can clearly see all the potential hernias from within, making it easier to pick up subtle femoral hernias.

What are the risks of keyhole hernia repair?

There are general risks, risks related to the wound and risks specific to hernia repair:

- General risks include blood clots in the veins or lungs although specific precautions will be taken to avoid this.
- Wound complications include:
 - Bleeding
 - Bruising
 - Infection
- Specific complications include:
 - Nerve injury (causing pain or numbness)
 - Hernia recurrence
 - Damage to the blood supply to the testicle or vas deferens in men (during groin hernia repair)
 - The need to convert from a keyhole to an open repair
 - Testicular discomfort (usually settles within a couple of weeks)
 - Collections of blood under the skin (a lump that rapidly becomes hard and painless and which shrinks with time)

What aftercare is required?

You will have a wound closed with glue and stitches that dissolve under the skin, so you can shower as soon as you like.

You will likely need to take simple painkillers for a couple of days.

You are encouraged to return to normal activities as soon as possible (including lifting). Let your body guide you - if it is uncomfortable, don't do it until you feel comfortable!

Do not drive for a week after hernia surgery. Then make sure you are happy and safe controlling the vehicle before you go out on the road.

You will be seen in clinic after approximately 6 weeks for a check-up.