

Exeter Vascular

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Open Hernia Repair

What is an “Open” hernia repair?

“Open” simply refers to the fact that the repair is performed through a larger incision than keyhole surgery.

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 the defect to prevent further hernias. This may be done with or without 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 open hernia repair?

Your hernia may be repaired under local anaesthetic or general anaesthetic (with you asleep).

What are the risks of open 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) 1-2%
 - Hernia recurrence
 - Damage to the blood supply to the testicle or vas deferens in men (during groin hernia repair)

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.