

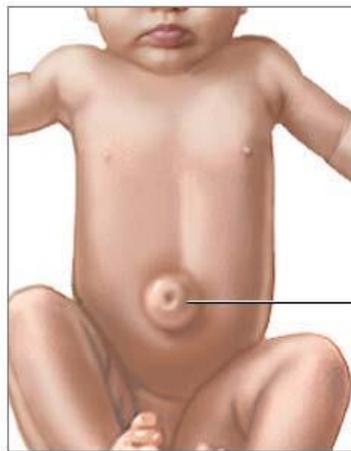


Dr. Angela Hanna

Umbilical Hernia

What is an umbilical hernia?

A hernia is a bulging of tissue through an opening in the abdomen. An umbilical hernia is when fluid or intestine pushes through the ring of muscle surrounding the belly button. You will notice a bulge or swelling under the skin in the belly button. In children this hernia forms during development if the ring of muscle around the umbilical cord. This kind of hernia is present at birth.



Umbilical hernia



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Dr. Rob Weinsheimer

What are the symptoms?

An inguinal hernia causes a bulge or swelling that you can see under the skin in the belly button. Most children with a hernia seem to be comfortable and act like they usually do. In rare cases the intestine in the hernia can get stuck (incarceration), causing severe pain and intestinal blockage. Your child may have severe pain or vomiting. If this happens call your surgeon immediately.

An umbilical hernia is usually first noticed after the umbilical cord falls off the infant. It is normal for the hernia to look larger and harder when your child is straining or crying.

The surgeon will carefully examine your child's abdomen to feel if a hernia is present. No special X-rays or tests are needed.

Will my child's umbilical hernia go away?

Most umbilical hernias will go away by themselves over time and no treatment is necessary. This may take a few years. Most children will have no symptoms from the hernia.

How is an umbilical hernia treated?

If the hernia does not go away by itself by 3-5 years of age or if the size of the opening in the abdomen is very large it will be surgically repaired. If the hernia is never repaired and does not go away, your child will have an hernia even as an adult. For women the risk of incarceration increases in pregnancy. For this reason it is recommended that children, especially girls whose hernia has not closed by itself, have the surgery to fix it.

How is an umbilical hernia repaired?

An umbilical hernia is usually repaired as a same day outpatient surgery at the hospital. Your child will have a general anesthesia for the surgery. This means we will give your child medicine to make him/her sleep and have no pain during the surgery. The surgery is done through a small half circle cut (incision) along a belly button skin crease. The surgery involves gently pushing the intestine back into the abdomen and closing the circle of internal tissue around the belly button. The incisions are closed using stitches that dissolve. These stitches can not be seen from the outside and do not need to be removed.

How do I care for my child at home?

Incision

Keep the incision clean and dry for 48 hours after surgery. The incision will be covered with clear surgical glue or steristrips. Sometimes an overlying dressing is applied and this can be removed after 48 hours after surgery.

The stitches will dissolve and do not need to be removed.

Some swelling and/or slight bruising of the belly button is normal.

Diet

When fully awake your child may have clear liquids like 7up, Jell-O, popsicles and apple juice.

Nausea and/or vomiting are common after surgery. If this occurs a clear liquid diet given slowly will help.

If your child tolerates fluids then advance to a light diet and then regular diet as tolerated.

Your child should drink plenty of fluids and a light diet the evening after surgery. The next day your child can resume a normal diet as tolerated.

Comfort

Following surgery pain and discomfort is normal especially when moving. Give painkillers as prescribed by the surgeon. Some children need more medicine than others. Gas pains are common.

Activity

Your child may shower or sponge bathes 48 hours after surgery. No tub baths or swimming for one week after surgery.

Infants and toddlers resume activity as tolerated. Older children limit their own activity and resume to normal activity as they feel comfortable. Avoid rough play, contact sports, bicycle riding and playground climbing equipment for 2-4 weeks and until pain free.

Return to school when child feels comfortable. School excuse notes are available on request.

Follow up

The surgeon will see your child 2 weeks after surgery.

When do I call the doctor?

Fever (greater than 101 degrees Fahrenheit)
Redness, swelling or persistent pain at the incision.

Redness that spreads from the incision site.
New bleeding or drainage from the incision site.

Inability to urinate within 8-12 hours after surgery.

Vomiting

Please call the pediatric surgery office at 206-215-2700 if you have any questions or concerns.

Notes



Pediatric General Surgery
1101 Madison, Suite 800
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For a free physician referral:
1-800-SWEDISH (1-800-793-3474)
www.swedish.org