

## **Benefits and Risks of Hernia Surgery**

It is necessary for you to understand the risks and benefits of the surgical procedure that you are about to undergo.

Hernia surgery is performed to repair a weakness in the abdominal wall that allows the protrusion of the abdominal contents, commonly the intestines. Repair of the hernia eliminates pain and the risk of incarceration. If the latter occurs, the procedure may be an emergency. Otherwise the surgery is the elective; however, if you are having episodes where the hernia is difficult to reduce, it should be repaired promptly. Usually the hernia can be repaired at a time of your convenience. You should not have to alter your regular activities because of hernia. If you do experience these problems, you should have the hernia fixed sooner rather than later. Hernias don't go away and there is nothing you can do to strengthen the area. You can wear a truss or a binder that may keep it reduced and decrease discomfort.

Most people worry more about the risk of anesthesia than the procedure itself. General anesthesia is extremely safe now days. The risk of death from general anesthesia is less than one in several hundred thousand for a healthy patient. Our anesthesiologists are very skilled and equipped with the most up-to-date monitoring devices. Your general medical condition will have the most significant impact on your risk for anesthesia and surgery. Smoking, obesity, heart disease, diabetes are some of the most common risk enhancers. I will address these concerns with you. If you have specific questions or concerns, please ask. You will also have the opportunity to speak with your anesthesiologist either the night before your surgery or while you are in the staging area. There will be a separate anesthesia consent form for you to sign. If you have a special request or desire a specific anesthesiologist perform your anesthesia please let us know a week or more in advance.

Any operation can have complications. Fortunately they are not common, and usually do not affect the long-term result. The risk of needing a blood transfusion is essentially zero; however, bleeding into the area the wound can occur and is called hematoma. This can occasionally be of such size that it has to be drained to facilitate healing and reduce pain. The risk of infection following hernia surgery is less than 1-2%. If infection occurs, it is usually superficial and not a major problem. With the use of mesh repairs, the risk of recurrence has fallen to the 1-2% range over the course of your lifetime. Rarely the mesh itself can become infected. This is a difficult problem and may result in the mesh having to be removed. Some hernias do not require a mesh for a strong repair. A rare patient has chronic pain in the area of a hernia repair. This may be due to nerve irritation or reflex sympathetic dystrophy (RSD). Fortunately this usually resolves with time, but if it does not, you may require referral to pain management specialist for injections or other types of therapy. Following inguinal hernia repair in males, there may be chronic swelling of the scrotum on the side of a hernia repair (hydrocele). This risk is less than 1 in a 100, but also may require a second operation to fix the problem.

These risks are not meant to be all-inclusive but cover the majority problems that occur after hernia surgery. You will be asked to sign a consent specifying that we have covered these risks and that you agree to the planned surgical procedure. If you have any questions, write them down and please remember to ask before your surgery. It is a privilege to be your surgeon and I will do my very best to assure a rapid recovery and an excellent result.

Dr. Mac

This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.daneprairie.com>.  
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.