

Inguinal Hernia

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

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WHAT HAPPENS DURING AND AFTER SURGERY?

The operation (including anesthesia) lasts about an hour. At the end of the operation, your child will wake up and be brought to the recovery room. Once everything is settled, someone will bring you to your child, so that you can be there before he/she is fully awake. Once your child is recovered, you will be allowed to go home. The stay in the recovery room should be about 1-2 hours.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE GET HOME?

Your child may not be very active following the operation. In fact, he/she may be nauseous, and even vomit a few times. This is usually a result of the anesthesia, and is short-lived: it will be gone by the next morning. In the meantime, make sure your child is at least able to drink clear liquids, to avoid dehydration. An electrolyte solution such as Pedialyte if your child is young (under 1 year), or any clear liquids (apple juice, broth) will do. Your child should be much better by the next morning, and no further restriction of activities is necessary. He/she can go back to school or day care rapidly, usually within 48 hours. Although there is no risk of tearing or rupturing anything, any type of straddling activity (rocking horse, tricycle, bike) should probably be avoided for a few days. Although they may feel fine, school-age children may need a few extra days before they can participate in school activities fully.

HOW DO I CARE FOR THE INCISION?

The incision in the groin is about one inch wide, in a skin crease. It is sutured inside with an absorbable suture: this suture will dissolve in a week or two,

and will not have to be removed. The area is also covered with a plastic film (collodion) or steri-strips, which keeps the area somewhat waterproof. The plastic layer will peel off in about a week. Still, it is better not to give your child a bath for about 3 to 4 days (sponge-bathing is better).



WHAT'S NORMAL... AND WHAT'S NOT?

VOMITING

May be very disturbing, but will be short-lived: It will be over by the next morning. If your child vomits everything (including liquids), and is very young (under a year), dehydration may be a concern. If your child has 1-2 wet diapers that evening, and is otherwise cheerful and playful, you shouldn't worry. In doubt, call us.

FEVER

A low-grade fever may be seen the first evening or night; after that, any fever (particularly 101° or more) is abnormal, and you should call us.

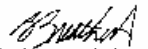
WOUND PROBLEMS

There may be some mild redness at the wound, but this should improve within a day or two. There may also be a drop or two of clear fluid. If the redness gets worse, or the wound starts to drain more fluid (particularly if it is cloudy or bloody), you should call us.

PAIN

Your child will have surprisingly little pain beyond the first 1 to 2 days after the operation. If your child is older than 1 year, you received a prescription for acetaminophen (Tylenol) with codeine; give him/her the prescribed dose, as often as every 4 hours. After 48 hours, plain acetaminophen (e.g. Children's Tylenol) will be sufficient.

If your child is under one year, do not give codeine; rather, give plain Tylenol (infant Tylenol, or similar product) as needed (as often as every 4 hours)


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