



California
HERNIA SPECIALISTS



The 5 Most Important Things to Know About Hernia's and Your Surgeon

All in one place

1. HERNIA'S ARE NOT (USUALLY) AN EMERGENCY

Although hernias don't go away on their own, they usually do not have to be operated on immediately. I'm not suggesting that you do nothing about your hernia, but I also don't recommend rushing into a treatment. Choosing what type of surgery to have and who to trust with your care is an important decision. Taking your time and doing your research can mean the difference between a quick and easy recovery versus a long term problem.

Medical studies have shown that about 25% of hernias will not get larger or more painful over time. These can be safely watched if they are not interfering with your activities. On the other hand, the other 75% of hernias will get progressively larger and more painful with time. Usually this happens over the course of weeks and months, but occasionally they can become acutely painful in a short period of time.

At my center, we never rush a patient into surgery if they have no symptoms. But for many patients, they don't want to take the chance that the hernia can enlarge and opt for treatment in the near term. For these patients, we can discuss treatment options and proceed with scheduling surgery when it is convenient for you.



2. UNDERSTAND YOUR DIFFERENT TREATMENT OPTIONS INCLUDING LAPAROSCOPIC AND OPEN HERNIA REPAIR

I will always discuss all of your treatment options with you at the time of your consultation. One of the most important parts of my job is to ensure that you are educated on what treatments are available to you, and which one(s) I would recommend for your particular situation. By knowing your options, you can be an important part of the decision making process.

Hernia surgery today is much more advanced than even five years ago. The use of laparoscopic surgery techniques and the newest, lightweight meshes (if needed), often allow patients to heal faster, in less pain, and have a more cosmetic outcome. Patients who are deciding on where to have hernia surgery should make sure that their surgeon has all the tools available to offer the most state-of-the-art techniques and mesh to their patients.

The two major types of hernia surgery are traditional open surgery, and laparoscopic surgery. No one approach is suitable for every patient. Patients with certain types of hernias may benefit from open hernia surgery while another similar patient may need laparoscopic hernia repair. The size of the hernia, the location, and whether it is unilateral or bilateral influences the best approach. Patients should read my "Comparison of Open & Laparoscopic Hernia Surgery" page on our website to understand the pro's and con's of each type of surgery.

The term 'tension free' hernia surgery is commonly used to describe hernia surgery. Hernias are caused by a weakening of the abdominal muscles. Some surgeons choose to sew the muscles back together, thus causing 'tension' on the muscles around the hernia. However, the muscles around a hernia are already weak, and over time those muscles tend to pull apart and the hernia can recur, or come back. Therefore, most hernia specialists today utilize a mesh to help strengthen the muscles after hernia repair. When using a mesh, the muscles themselves are not sewn together (see below). Instead, a mesh is placed over or under the hole in the muscle to prevent anything from pushing through the abdominal wall.



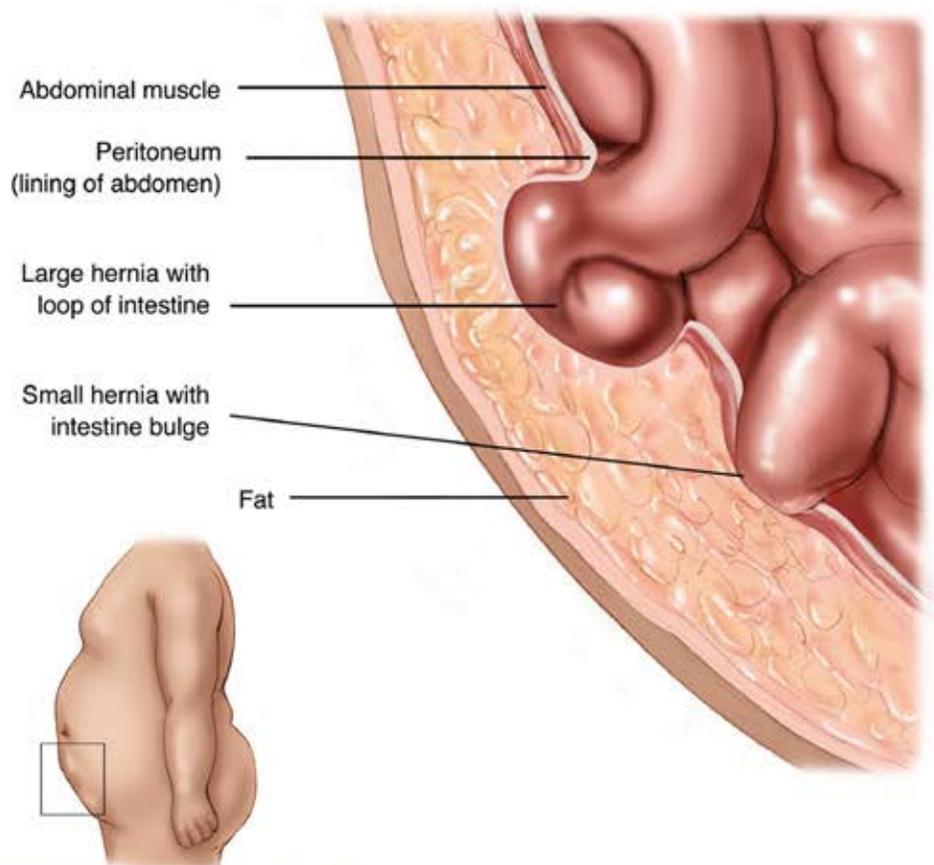
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3. WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON SYMPTOMS YOU CAN EXPECT WITH A HERNIA?

Hernia symptoms vary dramatically from one patient to the next. While some of the hernia symptoms listed below may be present in one patient, another patient may experience no symptoms. Some patients' hernia symptoms may develop slowly over time while other patients may develop severe hernia symptoms acutely.

One of the most common symptoms of a hernia is the rapid onset of pain at the hernia site. Pain which develops quickly is often caused by extreme pressure on the muscles, the peritoneum, and the nerves in the area of the hernia (see below). As fat and internal organs press through the small hole in the muscle (which is the hernia), the surrounding muscles and nerves are under pressure. This pressure is what causes the acute pain in many hernia patients. This is also why when the hernia is 'reduced', or pushed back in, the pain is often relieved since the pressure on the muscles and nerves in the area is reduced.

When internal fat or internal organs press through a hole in the muscle, a hernia develops. This is one of the most common symptoms of a hernia. These internal organs and fat cause the skin over the hernia to 'bulge' out. When patients reduce the hernia back inside, often that bulge regresses and disappears. However, when the hernia contents push back through the hole in the muscle, the bulge returns.



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4. RECOVERY FROM HERNIA SURGERY MAY NOT BE AS BAD AS YOU THINK!

While hernia surgery 10-20 years ago required 6-8 weeks of sedentary lifestyle, today's hernia surgeons can get you back to your full regime in as little as 3 weeks. Using advanced meshes and minimally invasive surgical techniques, postoperative pain, swelling and bruising can be minimized getting you back in the saddle as quickly as possible.

Unfortunately, even today, some surgeons are using mesh from 10 years ago while at the same time refusing to perform laparoscopic hernia repairs. Not me. We offer the most advanced hernia meshes available and commonly perform minimally invasive hernia surgery.

The first 3-4 days after surgery my patients refrain from any work or family activities. After these initial 4 days, patients can return to light activities (less than 10-20 pounds) at home or at work. After 3 weeks, they return to their full level of activities including weights, training, competitions, or just playing with their kids.

This isn't your father's hernia surgery!



5. CHOOSE A HERNIA SURGEON WHO IS HIGH VOLUME, AND MAKES HERNIA SURGERY A PRIORITY

Hernia surgery is a passion of mine and I take it as seriously as you would demand from your surgeon. Every surgery is handled methodically, and perfection is always my goal. Attention to every detail is critical when performing any surgery, especially one in as sensitive an area as most hernias are located.

You wouldn't want to fly in an airplane with a pilot that only flies once or twice a month. The same goes for your hernia surgeon. You want someone who is doing hernia surgery day in and day out. I personally perform up to 10-15 hernia surgeries a week, totalling almost 500 a year. These are broken up almost evenly between open surgery and advanced laparoscopic surgery for a well rounded approach.

While I am one of the highest volume surgeons in my area, one of my favorite parts of my job is being able to interact closely with each of my patients. Learning what your goals are for after your surgery, whether it's professional sports or playing with your children, helps us get to your final destination with the highest level of care.

Don't settle with your health.... and on your surgeon.



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CONTACT US TODAY:

Have a hernia? Not sure? Need help but don't know who to turn to?

That's where I can help. It's my job and my passion to treat hernias. Contact me at any time to schedule a consultation or to inquire about surgery.

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