



## Mesh and Your Hernia Repair

In addition to discussions with your surgeon, this brief information sheet has been prepared to help. You make the right choices for you

Not all hernias require an operation, but the majority will at some point, as they do generally get bigger and may cause more symptoms.

“Watchful waiting” is an option for patients with only minimal symptoms. The presence of a hernia in itself, should not limit your abilities to carry out all of your usual activities, including exercise.

The repair of a hernia requires an operation. Three main techniques exist

- 1 Laparoscopic repair with mesh
- 2 Open repair with mesh
- 3 Open repair without mesh

### Surgical mesh

The use of mesh to repair the majority of hernias has been the preferred method in the US, UK and worldwide for over 25 years. There is a large volume of data on the outcome of various hernia operations and different meshes. Meshes used in surgery are tightly regulated. Patient safety is critical.

Many patients who develop a hernia have a tissue weakness which doesn't hold stitches well. This explains why repairs with stitches have a higher failure rate than those with additional mesh. For the vast majority of patients, mesh poses little if any risk, and coupled with a lower recurrence rate, has resulted in mesh becoming the gold standard in hernia repairs

Mesh is a foreign material, like any synthetic implant, it can become infected. But this is a rare event. Some patients can develop chronic pain after surgery. There is no firm relationship with the use of mesh and chronic pain, and non-mesh repairs can also result in this problem.

For most patients mesh is a safe and reliable way to repair a hernia. Millions of hernia repairs have been successfully performed with mesh. Alternatives are available and will be discussed to help you make an informed decision.

