



Inguinal Hernia

Whānau/Family Information – Neonatal Services

Your pēpi/baby has been found to have an inguinal hernia. The aim of this leaflet is to answer some of the questions you may have about the operation to repair your pēpi inguinal hernia/hernias.

The leaflet does not replace the chats your Doctors/Nurses will have with you.

What is an inguinal hernia?

An inguinal hernia occurs when there is a weakness in the muscle around the groin (the area between the abdomen and thigh, resulting in a portion of an organ within the abdomen (tummy), such as the intestine (bowel), bulging through and causing a lump. Inguinal hernias are common in premature pēpi, especially boys and can occur on either side of the groin. Sometimes a hernia can occur on both sides.

Reason for surgery

The part of the bowel that bulges through the weakness usually moves in and out easily, but sometimes can become trapped. This is called strangulation and can cause infection and problems with the bowel. The aim of surgery is to correct the hernia before any of these problems occur. We usually plan to do this before your pēpi planned discharge from the Neonatal Unit.

Before surgery

The surgeon and anaesthetist will explain about the operation and anaesthetic and discuss any worries you have. They will ask you to sign consent forms giving permission for the operation and anaesthetic. Your pēpi should not have any breastmilk/milk for at least four hours before surgery. Fluids will be given through an intravenous (IV) drip to keep your pēpi hydrated.

What does surgery involve

Your pēpi will be closely monitored during the operation. A small cut is made in the groin. The hernia is repaired, and the cut is closed with dissolvable stitches (do not need to be removed) and a clear dressing which protects the small cut and allows for easy observation of the wound. This dressing will come away on its own, usually during a bath. Your pēpi will be given plenty of pain relief during the operation and will be given Panadol, if required, once back on the Neonatal Unit. The surgeon will update you once the operation is over.

The nurses will monitor your pēpi once he/she is back on the Neonatal Unit. Once your pēpi is awake and fully recovered feeds can be given. Your pēpi should be well enough to go home on his/her planned discharge date.

Please do not hesitate to ask any questions or express any concerns you have.

Once at home contact your GP

- If you see any redness around the wound or if there is any oozing from the wound.
- If your pēpi has a high temperature that does not come down with paracetamol or just generally does seem not so well.

These signs and symptoms may mean your pēpi has an infection and may need antibiotics.

