

# Groin Hernia: Brief Version

## What is a groin hernia?

A hernia happens when a part of your bowel pushes through a weak area or gap in the muscles of your belly. It is called a groin hernia when it happens in the groin. The groin is the area where the legs join the lower body.

## What is the cause?

A hernia may be caused by anything that makes the bowel push against a weak area in the belly. Some people are born with a weakness in their groin muscles. But a groin hernia can happen to anyone. It can happen when you:

- Lift heavy objects
- Cough or sneeze a lot
- Push too hard when you have a bowel movement
- Are overweight
- Are pregnant

Men with a large prostate can sometimes get a hernia from pushing too hard to urinate.

## What are the symptoms?

Symptoms you may have are:

- Pain in your lower belly or groin, especially when you are moving or straining
- A lump in your lower belly or groin that you can push back in

A lump that cannot be pushed back can be a very bad problem. It can mean that part of your bowel is trapped in the gap in your belly muscles. Then blood cannot get to that part of your bowel and part of the bowel may die. Or bowel movement might be blocked and not able to move through the trapped bowel. This is an emergency.

## How is it treated?

The main treatment is surgery to repair the opening in the muscle wall. Your healthcare provider will close the weak spot. Your provider may sew a piece of mesh over the weak spot and under the skin. This makes the area stronger.

## How can I take care of myself?

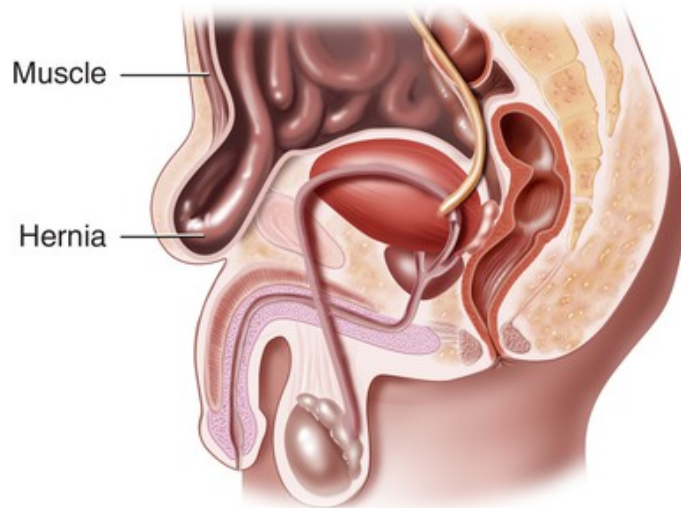
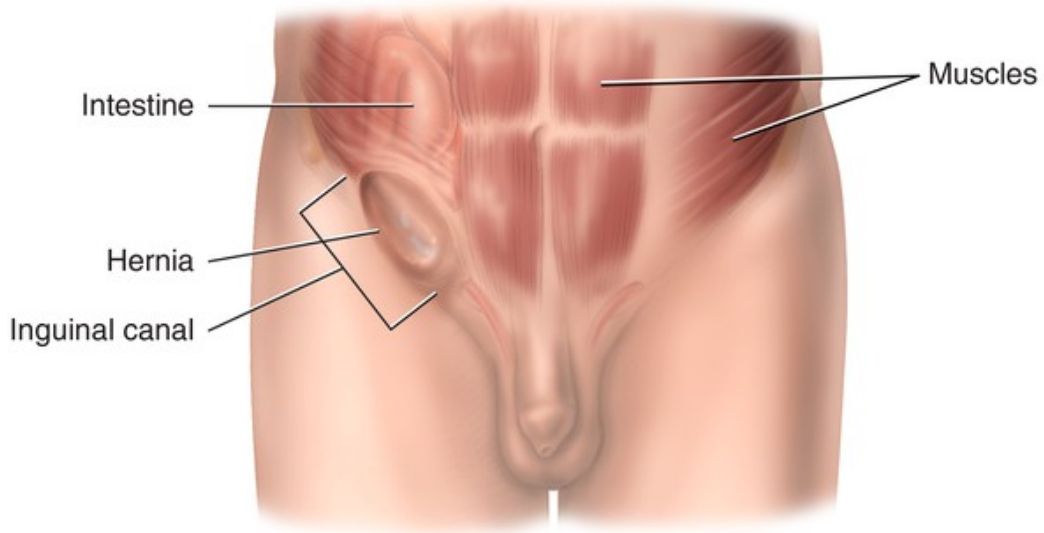
- Follow your healthcare provider's instructions.
- Follow safe practices when you move heavy things. Learn how to lift and move heavy items safely.
- Ask your provider if you need a groin support.
- Try to keep a healthy weight. Lose weight if you are overweight.

- Try not to get constipated: Eat healthy foods that are high in fiber, like bran, shredded wheat, and oatmeal. Drink plenty of water. Take stool softeners if needed.
- Don't smoke. This will help prevent coughing. Coughing can put pressure on your belly muscles. Talk to your healthcare provider about ways to quit smoking.

Developed by RelayHealth.

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