

Sports Hernia

What is a sports hernia?

A sports hernia is a tear in the muscles of the lower belly. It causes pain in the lower belly or groin.

What is the cause?

An injury can cause a sports hernia, although usually the problem develops slowly. Doctors aren't sure of how it happens. It's possible that tight or strong hip muscles tilt the hipbone forward and stretch the muscles in the lower belly. Over time, this may lead to small tears in the muscles and tissues.

Activities that involve a lot of bending over and leaning forward can lead to this problem. Athletes who participate in sports like soccer, football, baseball, hockey, rugby, tennis, or track are most likely to get a sports hernia.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms may include:

- Pain on just one side of the lower belly or in the groin
- Pain that is usually worse with sudden movement, such as sprinting, kicking, side-stepping, sneezing, or coughing

How is it diagnosed?

Your healthcare provider will examine you and ask about your symptoms, activities, and medical history. There are no specific tests for this problem. Tests may include:

- Ultrasound scan, which uses sound waves to show pictures of the lower belly
- MRI, which uses a strong magnetic field and radio waves to show detailed pictures of the lower belly

You may have other types of scans or procedures to see if anything else might be causing your symptoms

How is it treated?

The pain from a sports hernia will usually go away in a few weeks with self-care. Your provider may recommend stretching and exercises to help you heal. In some cases, your provider may give you a shot of steroid medicine.

If rest and self-care don't relieve your symptoms after 6 weeks, your healthcare provider may suggest surgery.

How can I take care of myself?

To help relieve pain:

- Put an ice pack, gel pack, or package of frozen vegetables wrapped in a cloth on the painful area every 3 to 4 hours for up to 20 minutes at a time.
- Take an anti-inflammatory medicine, such as ibuprofen, or other medicine as directed by your provider. Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medicines (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen, may cause stomach bleeding and other problems. These risks increase with age. Read the label and take as directed. Unless recommended by your healthcare provider, you should not take this medicine for more than 10 days.

Follow your healthcare provider's instructions. Ask your provider:

- How long it will take to recover
- What activities you should avoid and when you can return to your normal activities
- How to take care of yourself at home
- What symptoms or problems you should watch for and what to do if you have them

Make sure you know when you should come back for a checkup.

How can I help prevent a sports hernia?

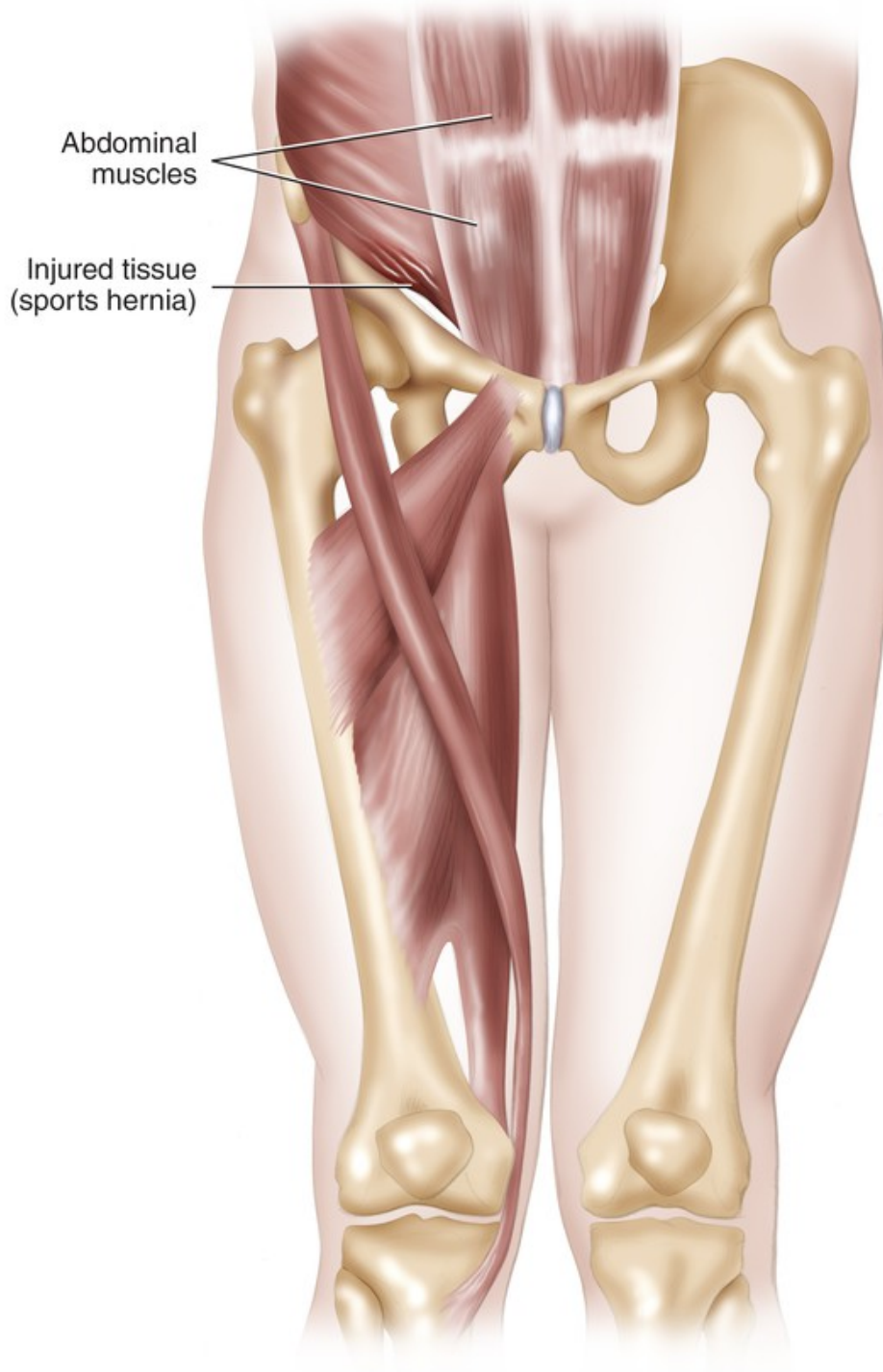
You may be able to help avoid getting a sports hernia by doing sit-ups or abdominal crunches to tone your stomach muscles.

Make sure that you don't overdo it when you start an exercise program.

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