



## Information for Parents of Infants with Inguinal Hernia

During admission your baby was observed to have an inguinal hernia. Surgery is not indicated at this stage, however it is important that you observe your baby for signs of complications caused by the hernia.

A hernia occurs when a section of the intestine protrudes through a weakness in the abdominal muscles. It is usually seen as a soft bulge underneath the skin. A hernia that occurs in the groin area is called an Inguinal Hernia. The swelling is usually painless, smooth and soft in texture and may disappear or reduce in size when baby is relaxed or lying flat. It may appear to increase in size when the baby is crying, coughing or straining. This is known as a Reducible Hernia. A reducible hernia needs to be observed, but does not need emergency treatment.

If part of the bowel becomes trapped and cannot return to the abdomen, it is at risk of having the blood supply cut off. It is then described as an incarcerated hernia. This is a serious condition.

Symptoms of an Incarcerated Hernia:

- Baby appears unwell and unsettled.
- Vomiting.
- Temperature.
- Swelling that appears red or dusky in colour and is painful on touching.
- Swelling that does not change in size when the baby cries.

If any of these symptoms occur at home it is important that your baby is seen urgently by a Doctor, at your nearest hospital, Princess Margaret Hospital if possible.

You will be given an appointment to see the Surgeons one to two weeks after discharge from the Nursery. At that stage, they will give you a plan for any further treatment of the inguinal hernia that is required.

Please ring health direct on 1800 022 222 if you have any other questions.

[Royal Children's Hospital - Kids Health Info: Inguinal Hernia Fact Sheet](#)

[OHSU Health Information: Inguinal Hernia in Children](#)