

# Understanding Hernias

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Why do I have a hernia?**

Some hernias can be present at birth while others develop later in life. Hernias often run in families and can also be caused by increased pressure on the abdominal cavity.

### **I have a hernia that usually doesn't bother me but occasionally causes pain. Should it be repaired?**

Hernias in the groin, otherwise known as inguinal hernias, are the number nine cause of death among men worldwide due to intestinal strangulation. A hernia is most dangerous within the first three months it is noticed. Patients who have hernias and no pain have a 3% risk of emergent surgery each year. Hernia repair is the proactive way to avoid the risk of an emergency. If in generally good health, the repair can be performed at an outpatient surgery center, without overnight stay, saving costs. There will be some temporary lifting restrictions afterward to ensure complete healing before returning to normal activities.

### **Can diet, exercise or rest help a hernia repair itself?**

The simple answer is no (with rare qualifiers) - you cannot rehabilitate a hernia with a change in your diet or activities.

### **I have a painful hernia in the groin, yet my friend has a hernia and suffers no pain. Why is that?**

An inguinal hernia is the result of a breakdown of the normal supporting structures. A number of nerves run through that area, and a nerve that is stretched and experiencing pressure can be injured, leading to chronic pain whether the hernia is repaired or not. When you have the hernia repaired, your chronic pain may be eliminated with careful attention to these nerves during surgery.

### **A coworker has mild chronic pain after a hernia repair and I am afraid of having an operation for mine. What is the best way to avoid this situation?**

Recent studies have shown that 25-30% of patients who have undergone laparoscopic or an open hernia repair experience chronic pain as a result. The risk of pain drops to approximately 5% if one of the nerves within the hernia repair site can be removed during surgery. My own research has demonstrated that 36% of these nerves can be damaged to the point of causing a neuroma (nerve tumor) from the hernia itself and this can be dealt with successfully with open surgery if the surgeon is aware of this condition.

over

# Understanding Hernias

*continued*

## About Cascade Hernia Institute

Cascade Hernia Institute is a product of Dr. Robert Wright's continual pursuit of excellence in his surgical speciality. With a focus on perfecting surgical technique and published results uncommon to other surgical practices, Dr. Wright brings award-winning, internationally-recognized expertise to our local community. Cascade Hernia Institute specializes in high quality hernia repair with clinician-dominated hernia research, producing clinical outcome studies free of commercial bias.

Dr. Wright has been serving Pierce County's surgical needs since 1990, employing sound technology and surgical techniques while providing the highest quality care with compassion.

## Ongoing Research

Team lead by Robert C. Wright, MD, FACS

- Histology of Inguinal Neuritis. Hypothesis: Inguinal Neuritis is similar to Morton's Neuroma of the foot.
- Patterns of Inguinal Neuritis in Recurrent Inguinal Hernia. Hypothesis: Similar pattern as with Primary Inguinal Hernia.
- Finding Inguinal Neuritis. Video: Instructional Presentation for World Hernia Society.

## Publications, Presentations & Articles

- "Inguinal Neuritis is Common in Primary Inguinal Hernia," (August 2011, Hernia). Primary author: Robert C. Wright, MD, FACS
  - » Featured in General Surgery News Article (August 2011)
  - » Featured in Anesthesiology News (September 2011)
- "Inguinal Hernia Causes Traumatic Neuroma," Presentation, March 2010, American Hernia Society Annual Meeting
- "Improvement of Laryngopharyngeal Reflux Symptoms after Laparoscopic Hill Hiatal Hernia Repair," (May 2003, Vol. 185, No. 5, The American Journal of Surgery)
- "Cough, Sore Throat, Voice Loss and Globus: Symptoms Respond to Hiatal Hernia Repair," Meeting Speaker, 2002, PCMA
- "Laryngopharyngeal Reflux; Beyond GERD," Meeting Speaker, February 2003, St Jude Medical Center, Los Angeles
- "Laparoscopic Nissen Fundoplication: The Learning Curve in Hiatal Hernia Repair," May 1997, Scott & White Surg. Alum. Soc., Texas A&M
- "Superior Lymph Node Resection Achievable with Laparoscopic Colectomy," (March 2008, Vol. 74, No.3, The American Surgeon)

## CASCADE HERNIA INSTITUTE at Meridian Surgery Center

Robert C. Wright, MD, FACS, PS

208 17th Avenue SE, Suite 201 - Puyallup, WA 98372

Phone: 253.840.1999 Fax: 253.445.4125

[cascadeherniainstitute.com](http://cascadeherniainstitute.com)