

# Abdominal Wall Hernia Repair

Umbilical, incisional, ventral or epigastric repair · Keep this sheet handy during your recovery.



**7 days**

DRESSINGS DRY



**~7 days**

DRIVING



**4-6 wks**

NO HEAVY LIFTING



**1-3 wks**

BACK TO WORK

## Wound & dressing care

- Keep the dressing clean, intact and dry for **7 days**; shower after 7 days and pat dry gently.
- No baths, swimming or spa pools for 2 weeks or until cleared.
- Some tightness, bruising and swelling of the tummy is normal.
- A firm, sometimes squishy swelling around the scar (a seroma) can last weeks to months — it is not the hernia coming back and rarely needs draining.

## Pain & comfort

- Pain and tightness at the repair site are common — take regular pain relief at first.
- Wear your abdominal support binder, if provided, for comfort; support your tummy with a pillow when you cough or get up.
- A numb patch of skin around the scar is common and usually settles.

## Activity, work & driving

- Gentle daily walking from day one; increase a little each day.
- Avoid heavy lifting and straining for **4-6 weeks** to protect the repair.
- Return to desk work in 1-3 weeks; discuss heavier work with your surgeon.
- Drive again once you can perform an emergency stop without flinching and are off strong painkillers (often 1-2 weeks).


## Diet & bowels


- Eat and drink normally; keep well hydrated.
- Constipation is common — fibre, fluids and a gentle laxative (such as Movicol) early on help you avoid straining.


## Seek help urgently if...

- ! Redness, swelling, warmth or wound discharge
- ! Fever or feeling generally unwell
- ! Persistent or severe abdominal pain
- ! A returning bulge, or pain with nausea/vomiting
- ! Calf pain or swelling, or shortness of breath

## Questions during your recovery?

 (07) 3333 5518

 [admin@upperedgesurgery.com.au](mailto:admin@upperedgesurgery.com.au)

 Watkins Medical Centre, L7 Suite 351, Spring Hill

After hours or an emergency — call **000** or go to your nearest Emergency Department.

Dr Goutham Sivasuthan, FRACS · Upper Edge Surgery · Brisbane · Logan · Redlands · Moreton Bay.

Last reviewed June 2026. This is general guidance only — the specific advice your surgeon gives you about your operation always takes priority.

Most people recover steadily over a few weeks. These general tips help you heal well and avoid common problems after abdominal or keyhole surgery. Use them alongside the specific instructions on the front of this sheet.



## Preventing blood clots

- Move your ankles and legs often — ankle circles, foot pumps and knee bends several times a day.
- Get up and walk a little, regularly, rather than sitting for long stretches.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Take any blood-thinning medication exactly as prescribed.



## Breathing & chest care

- Take 5–10 slow, deep breaths several times a day, then a gentle cough to clear your chest.
- Support your tummy with a pillow or your hand when you cough or sneeze.
- Sitting upright and walking help your lungs recover.



## Getting out of bed safely

- 1 Roll onto your side with your knees bent.
- 2 Let your lower legs move off the edge of the bed.
- 3 Push up sideways with your arms — not your tummy — to sit up.
- 4 Pause for a moment, then stand up slowly.



## Caring for your wound & scar

- Keep dressings dry as directed on the front; once healed, keep the area clean.
- No baths, swimming or spa pools for about 2 weeks; keyhole stitches are usually dissolvable.
- Scars settle well over months. Once fully healed, silicone gel or gentle massage helps; protect new scars from the sun.



## Medicines & comfort

- Take pain relief regularly at first, then cut back as you improve.
- Don't exceed the stated paracetamol dose; take anti-inflammatories with food if they suit you.
- Strong painkillers can cause constipation — start a gentle laxative (such as Movicol) early and stay hydrated.
- Avoid alcohol while taking strong painkillers.



## Eating well for healing

- Eat regular, balanced meals with protein to support healing.
- Plenty of fibre and fluids keep your bowels regular and help you avoid straining.
- If you smoke, stopping — even for now — speeds wound healing.



**Looking after yourself matters.** Rest when you need to, increase activity a little each day, and don't hesitate to call us on (07) 3333 5518 if something doesn't feel right.