

Umbilical Hernia

Take your child to the Emergency Department NOW if:

Your child has an umbilical hernia and has **not** had surgery and:

- You are not able to push the hernia back in through the hole.
- Is in a lot of pain.
- Is feeling sick to his or her stomach or is vomiting.
- Your child's stomach is distended (swollen and firm).

Note: If your child has any of the symptoms listed above, he or she may need to have surgery right away.

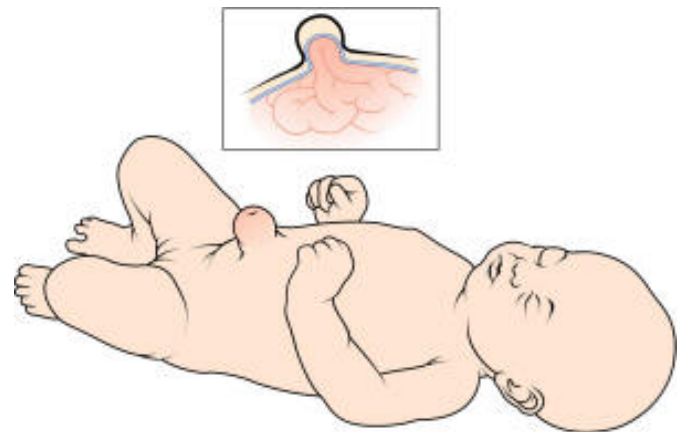
Call the Surgery Team night or day if your child has any of the following symptoms:

- Has any bleeding the day after surgery.
- Is not urinating at least every 8 hours.
- Has pain that is not relieved with pain medicine.
- Cries uncontrollably for more than an hour.
- Is vomiting the day after surgery.
- Has a temperature higher than 101°F (38.3°C).
- Has increasing swelling, redness, or pain at incision site or the area around it.
- Has pus (yellow-green, foul smelling drainage coming from the incision).

Note: Call the General Surgery Office 314.454.6022 during office hours. If after hours (nights, weekends, and holidays) call 314.454.6000 and ask for the Surgery Resident on-call to be paged.

An umbilical hernia is a small hole or weakness in the stomach muscle at the umbilicus (belly button).

When your child cries or strains, there is an increase in pressure. This causes the area to bulge because abdominal contents are forced through the hole. Most of the time it is only fat or fluid that pushes out. It is possible for intestine to push through the hole. Umbilical hernias are common. They occur more in premature (born too early) babies, low birth weight babies, and African American babies.



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75% of the time this type of hernia goes away on its own.

If your child still has the hernia at 4 years old, surgery may be needed to fix it.

What to Expect Before Surgery

- No testing is needed.
- One day before surgery, you will be told what time to bring your child in for surgery.
- Your child cannot eat for 6 hours before surgery and needs to stop drinking clear liquids for 3 hours before surgery.

What to Expect During and Shortly After Surgery

- Your child will have the hernia fixed under anesthesia which means he or she is asleep and does not feel any pain.
- Surgery will take about 60 minutes.
- A small incision (cut) is made below the hernia to fix it. The intestines are pushed back behind the muscle wall and the muscle wall is repaired.
- After surgery your child will go to the recovery room. Once your child is looked at in the recovery room, someone will come to get you. This person will bring you to your child.
- If your child is having out-patient surgery, your child will be able to go home once he or she is fully awake and able to drink liquids.
- The average amount of time in the recovery room is 1 to 2 hours.

What can be Expected at Home After Surgery

- Your child may not be very active after the surgery (the day of surgery).
- Nausea and vomiting should be gone by the morning after the surgery.

Things You Can Do to Help Your Child At Home

- Your child may have acetaminophen (Tylenol®) as needed for pain.
- Your child can eat whatever food he or she did before the surgery.
- **Care for the Incision**
 - The stitches will hold the cut closed. These will dissolve in 1 to 2 weeks. Steri-strips (small pieces of tape) will cover the stitches. Skin glue may also be used with steri-strips.

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- A small piece of gauze and a clear dressing will cover the incision site. This puts some pressure on the site. This dressing can come off 5 days after surgery at home.
- Steri-strips should stay over the incision for 7 to 10 days. After 10 days, you may take these off if they have not already fallen off.
- The incision area may be swollen and bruised for a few days.
- A sponge bath or shower is recommended for the first 10 days. **The incision site should not soak in water for the first 7 to 10 days. This means, no tub bath, jacuzzis, or swimming in a body of water (pool, lake, stream, pond, or ocean) for 7 to 10 days.**

For General Health Information and Resources:

Call or visit the [Family Resource Center](#), a health information library on the 3rd floor of the hospital. Call 314.454.2350, email at frc@bjc.org, or check out the FREE [St. Louis Children's Hospital Kid Care App](#).

