

## General Surgery Procedure

# Incisional Hernia Repair

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## 1. What is an incisional hernia?

An incisional hernia is a medical condition characterised by the protrusion of tissues, typically the abdominal contents, through a previous surgical incision or scar in the abdominal wall. These hernias occur as a result of the weakening or separation of the abdominal muscles around the surgical site, creating an opening through which tissues can bulge.

## 2. What are the advantages of an Incisional hernia repair?

- **Effective treatment:** It provides an effective solution to treat the hernia, relieving patients of the associated discomfort, pain, and complications.
- **Reduced recurrence risk:** By using synthetic mesh in the repair, the procedure minimizes the risk of hernia recurrence, offering a long-term solution.
- **Improved quality of life:** This repair significantly improves the quality of life for patients, allowing them to return to their regular daily activities without the limitations imposed by the hernia.
- **Minimally invasive options:** Some incisional hernia repairs can be performed using minimally invasive techniques, reducing scarring, pain, and overall recovery time.
- **Prevent severe complications:** By addressing the hernia, it also helps prevent more severe complications that could arise if the hernia is left untreated.

## 3. What are the possible risks?

- **Infection:** There is a risk of surgical site infection following the procedure. These infections are typically treated with antibiotics.
- **Bleeding:** Some bleeding is common after surgery, but significant bleeding can occur in rare cases, requiring medical attention.
- **Recurrence:** Although the use of synthetic mesh reduces the risk, there is still a chance of hernia recurrence.
- **Chronic pain:** Some patients may experience persistent or chronic pain at the surgical site, which can affect their quality of life. This is relatively uncommon.
- **Nerve damage:** The surgery may damage nearby nerves, leading to numbness or discomfort in the abdominal area or incision site.
- **Bowel obstruction:** In rare instances, adhesions or scar tissue may cause bowel obstruction, requiring further treatment.

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### 4. What happens after?

Post-surgery, patients are advised to maintain an active but cautious lifestyle, with walking as a recommended exercise in the early recovery phase. Heavy lifting should be avoided for four to six weeks, gradually returning to regular activities. Most individuals can usually return to work within one to two weeks, with potential modifications for physically demanding jobs. Driving is typically allowed after one to two weeks, guided by the surgeon. Adhering to post-operative care instructions is crucial, and immediate medical attention is necessary for any unusual or severe symptoms.