



General Risks of Surgery

Any surgical procedure is associated with risks. While the surgeon makes every attempt to minimise risks, complications can occur which may have permanent effects.

When you are making the decision to have surgery, you must keep in mind that your surgeon cannot guarantee that the surgery will always be successful or that the surgery bears no risk.

The operation and its outcome might not meet the expectations of the patient. It is not usual for a doctor to dwell at length on every possible side effect or rare, serious complications. Sometimes such detail can frighten the patient so much that treatment is refused, and the patient is worse off than running the usually small risk of complications.

The following risks can occur after any operation.

The hernia may occasionally recur.

Cardiovascular problems such as heart attack, thrombosis (the formation of one or more blood clots) or stroke (a blood clot that has gone to the brain). A blood clot may move to a lung (called a "pulmonary embolism"), which can be fatal.

Infection of the wound can occasionally occur. Infection is more likely to occur in people with diabetes or people taking prednisone or prednisolone.

A "keloid" may form in the scar left from a surgical incision. A keloid scar is raised and irregularly shaped, and may be itchy and inflamed. Scarring from small incisions is variable. Most incisions heal well, and few people will develop keloids. A keloid can be annoying but is not a threat to health.

Chronic pain may occur due to involvement of a nerve in the hernia repair, this may long lasting.

Specific Risks of Laparoscopic Repair

Serious problems due to laparoscopic surgery are uncommon. Possible risks include:

Injury to organs near the hernia site, such as intestine and bladder

Injury to major blood vessels

Gas embolism (a bubble of carbon dioxide gets into a blood vessel), this can be life threatening

Injury to nerves from the staple gun attaching the mesh to the muscles

Swelling of the scrotum due to gas or sometimes a fluid collection, which may need to be emptied with a needle after the operation

A new hernia at one of the instrument puncture sites

Bowel obstruction due to adherence to the internally placed mesh

Unexpected Side Effects

Be sure to tell your surgeon if you have any of the following unexpected side effects:

Fever (more than 38°C)

Chills

An incision that drains for more than one day

Increasing pain or redness around an incision

Re-operation

If a complication after surgery does not resolve, the surgeon may have to do another operation. The re-operation may be done with the laparoscope or using open surgery. Rarely, the body may reject the plastic mesh patch used to repair the hernia. Also, some months or years after surgery, the hernia can recur. These conditions may require re-operation.

The Hernia Clinic

Level 1, 9 Caledonian Road, Christchurch 8013

P: (03) 961 6666

E: info@herniaclinic.co.nz

