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Inguinal hernia

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By Chris Tighe at 10:16 am, Oct 14, 2014

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Symptoms

By Mayo Clinic Staff

Some inguinal hernias don't cause any symptoms. You might not know you have one until your doctor discovers it during a routine medical exam. Often, however, you can see and feel the bulge created by the hernia. The bulge is usually more obvious when you stand upright, especially if you cough or strain.

Inguinal hernia signs and symptoms include:

- A bulge in the area on either side of your pubic bone
- A burning, gurgling or aching sensation at the bulge
- Pain or discomfort in your groin, especially when bending over, coughing or lifting
- A heavy or dragging sensation in your groin
- Weakness or pressure in your groin
- Occasionally, pain and swelling around the testicles when the protruding intestine descends into the scrotum

You should be able to gently and easily push the hernia back into your abdomen when you're lying down. If not, applying an ice pack to the area may reduce the swelling enough so that the hernia slides in easily. Lying with your pelvis higher than your head also may help.

Incarcerated hernia

If you aren't able to push the hernia in, the omentum or a loop of intestine can be trapped (incarcerated) in the abdominal wall. An incarcerated hernia can lead to a strangulated hernia, which cuts off the blood supply to your intestine. Surgery is needed to repair the hernia and restore blood supply to the bowel. A

strangulated hernia can be life-threatening if it isn't treated.

Signs and symptoms of strangulated hernia include:

- Nausea, vomiting or both
- Fever
- Rapid heart rate
- Sudden pain that quickly intensifies
- A hernia bulge that turns red, purple or dark

If any of these signs or symptoms occurs, call your doctor right away.

Signs and symptoms in children

Inguinal hernias in newborns and children result from a weakness in the abdominal wall that's present at birth. Sometimes the hernia may be visible only when an infant is crying, coughing or straining during a bowel movement. In an older child, a hernia is likely to be more apparent when the child coughs, strains during a bowel movement or stands for a long period of time.

When to see a doctor

See your doctor if you have a painful or noticeable bulge in your groin on either side of your pubic bone. The bulge is likely to be more noticeable when you're standing upright, and you usually can feel it if you put your hand directly over the affected area. Seek immediate medical care if a hernia bulge turns red, purple or dark.

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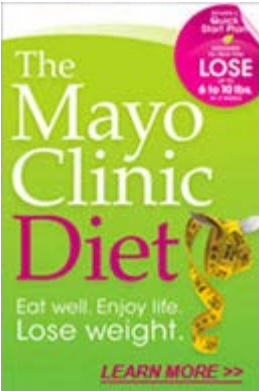
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