Abdominal Hernias - Adults

This pathway covers the management of abdominal hernias including inguinal, femoral, umbilical, epigastric or incisional hernias.

The term ventral hernia is a non-specific term which could include umbilical, epigastric or incisional hernias, and therefore the more specific term should be used.

Link to guidance:
http://www.enhertsccg.nhs.uk/

Patient presents with suspected abdominal hernia

- Assessment
  - BMI
  - does patient work in heavy or manual occupation?

- Incarcerated
  - Irreducible
  - No obstruction

- Obstructed / strangulated
  - Symptoms of bowel obstruction
  - Irreducible and very painful
  - Signs of shock
  - Peritonitis

- Urgent referral to surgeon

- Emergency referral to surgical on-call team

Femoral

- Refer to surgery - risk of strangulation

Inguinal hernia

- Hernias in female patients

- Refer to secondary care

- Hernias in male patients

- Incarcerated

  - Recent
    - Surgical referral 2-8 weeks
  
  - Longstanding (> 6 weeks)
    - Surgical referral within 3 months

- Reducible

  - Referral for surgery is NOT mandatory
    - http://www.enhertsccg.nhs.uk/

  - Consider surgery if
    - symptoms interfere with work or every day activities
    - inguinal scrotal hernia
    - hernia increases in size month on month
    - patient works in heavy/manual occupation
    - hernia is difficult to reduce

  - Symptomatic: consider referral to surgery

  - Minimally symptomatic: consider watchful waiting

See pathway
The Management of Overweight & Obese Adults:
http://www.enhertsccg.nhs.uk/

Advise weight loss if obese

- Weight loss should not delay surgery but will improve surgical and patient outcomes. If BMI >30 please see obesity pathway

Hernias in female patients

- Refer to secondary care

Umbilical, para-umbilical, epigastric or incisional

- Differentiate from divarication of the recti

- Assessment for surgical treatment should be made by a surgeon

- Surgical referral within 3 months

PIL - Abdominal Reduction:
http://patient.info/health/abdominal-reduction

Hernias in male patients

- Refer to surgery

- Risk of strangulation

- Urgent referral to surgeon

See pathway
Divarication of Recti:
http://www.enhertsccg.nhs.uk/