

7 of the Most Common Causes and Risk Factors for Hernias



Anything that may lead to increased intra-abdominal pressure, or the weakening of abdominal muscles can lead to a hernia. Some of the most common risk factors are:

1. **Family History** – Some people have a genetic predisposition for weaker connective tissue than the general population, leading to a higher likelihood of hernia development.¹
2. **Male Sex**– Approximately 25% of all males will develop an inguinal hernia during their lifetimes, compared to only 2% of women.²
3. **Obesity** – Obesity creates more pressure in the abdomen. As pressure increases, so does the risk of hernia formation, particularly if a previous abdominal surgery has taken place.¹
4. **Pregnancy** – Pregnancy, particularly undergoing labor, increases pressure throughout the body and in the abdomen. Women who have undergone labor are more likely to have hernias than those who have not.¹
5. **Weightlifting** – Repetitive weightlifting exercises or jobs that require frequent lifting of heavy materials can increase pressure in the abdomen. Over time, these activities can lead to a hernia formation.¹
6. **Chronic Lung Infections or Coughing** – Coughing increases pressure in the abdomen. The presence of a persistent cough over a long period of time from illnesses like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) can lead to hernia formation.^{1,3}
7. **Smoking** – Smoking is a known risk factor for development of a hernia and increases the risk of a hernia recurrence.⁴

If you have one or more of the above risk factors and are concerned about having a hernia, consult your doctor. You can visit our [Surgeon Finder](#) to find a hernia surgeon near you.

1.Pluta RM, Burke AE, Golub RM. Abdominal Hernia. JAMA.2011;305(20):2130. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/900171>. 2. Rather, Abdominal Hernias: Practice Essentials, Background, Anatomy. Medscape. March 16, 2023. <https://www.medscape.com/answers/189563-45214/what-are-the-sex-related-demographics-for-abdominal-inguinal-hernias>. 3. Symons, J. What is a Hernia? Types of Hernias & Risk Factors. Stamford Health. October 2, 2018. <https://www.stamfordhealth.org/healthflash-blog/surgery/hernia-types-risk-factors/>. 4. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6637424/>