

Quick Facts: Hernias

A hernia is defined as a protrusion of an organ or part (such as the intestine) through connective tissue or the abdominal wall in which it is normally enclosed.



An estimated **1 in 4 men** and **1 in 50 women** will require surgery for an inguinal hernia during their lifetime.¹



Types of hernias

Hiatal Hernia

55-60% of adults over 50 experience a hiatal hernia.²

A hiatal hernia occurs when the upper part of your stomach bulges through the large muscle separating your abdomen and chest (diaphragm). Most small hiatal hernias cause no symptoms. But larger hiatal hernias can cause gastroesophageal reflux, which results when the stomach contents leak upwards into the esophagus.³

Ventral Hernia

Ventral hernias occur in 1 in 5 adults.⁴

A ventral hernia is an umbrella term for a protrusion of intestine or other tissue through a weakness or gap in the abdominal wall. Umbilical (belly button) and incisional (at the site of a prior surgery) are specific types of ventral hernias.⁵

Umbilical Hernia

Umbilical hernias affect 20% of babies and 2% of adults.⁶

An abnormal bulge that can be seen or felt at the umbilicus (belly button), umbilical hernias occur when a portion of the intestine, lining of the abdomen, or fluid from the abdomen pushes through the muscle of the abdominal wall.⁷

Inguinal Hernia

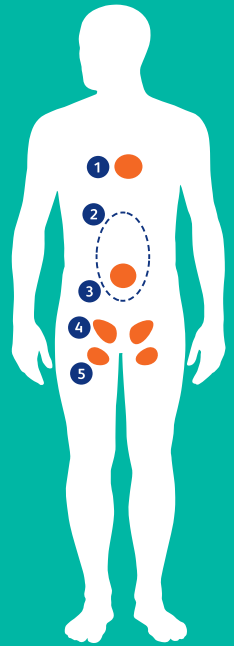
27% of men and 3% of women will develop an inguinal hernia.⁸

Inguinal hernias are the most common form of hernias. There are two types – indirect and direct. Indirect inguinal hernias are congenital defects through which abdominal contents protrude into the spermatic cord in males. Direct inguinal hernias are more common in adult males and usually occur due to weakness in the abdominal wall that develops over time, or are due to straining or heavy lifting.^{9,10}

Femoral Hernia

Femoral hernias are relatively rare and only make up 2-4% of all groin hernias.¹¹

A femoral hernia occurs when fatty tissue or a part of your bowel pokes through into your groin at the top of your inner thigh. It pushes through a weakened spot in the abdominal wall into an area called the femoral canal. Femoral hernias tend to occur more often in women than in men.¹²



Hernia Types

- 1 **Hiatal** (diaphragm)
- 2 **Ventral** (abdomen)
- 3 **Umbilical** (navel)
- 4 **Inguinal** (groin)
- 5 **Femoral** (thigh)

1. Beadles CA, Meagher AD, Charles AG. Trends in Emergent Hernia Repair in the United States. *JAMA Surg.* 2015;150(3):194-200. 2. <https://www.healthline.com/health/what-size-hiatal-hernia-needs-surgery> 3. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/hiatal-hernia/symptoms-causes/syc-20373379> 4. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9884201/> 5. <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/hernias/ventral-abdominal-hernia> 6. <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/umbilical-hernia> 7. <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/hernias/umbilical-hernia> 8. <https://www.india.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases/inguinal-hernia> 9. <https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007106.html> 10. <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/16266-inguinal-hernia> 11. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8521781/> 12. <https://www.mountsinai.org/health-library/diseases-conditions/femoral-hernia>