Caring for your baby after surgery
Keep the area clean and dry for two days. If it becomes soiled with faeces (poo), wash with water and dry. After two days your baby may have a bath, but do not use bubble bath.
The stitches are under the skin and dissolvable. They usually take up to a year to dissolve.
Following discharge, your baby will be seen in the outpatients’ department.

If St George’s Hospital is not your local hospital
Once your baby has had surgery and made a good recovery, i.e. when their specialist medical and nursing requirements are less, your baby will be transferred back to the care of your local hospital. This transfer is a sign of progress and will not occur until your baby is ready. It will allow you to be closer to home and become familiar with your local healthcare professionals.
What is inguinal hernia?

Your baby has been diagnosed as having an inguinal (groin) hernia. This is quite a common problem and one in six premature babies will develop a hernia. Your baby will need an operation to mend the hernia. Inguinal hernias are more common in boys than girls. This is quite a common problem and one in six premature babies have an inguinal hernia.

When will the operation take place?

We aim to repair the hernia when your baby is well and just before discharge from hospital. However, sometimes this is not possible and your baby will need to come into hospital for the surgery at a later date. If your baby is at home you will receive details of where and when to bring your baby into hospital. You will also receive instructions as to when your baby should stop feeding prior to surgery.

What does the operation involve?

Your baby will be given an anaesthetic. A cut will be made in the baby's groin and the hole in the muscle will be repaired with stitches and the skin closed with stitches under the surface. A small dressing will be applied to the site of the hernia repair. Milk feeds can be given as soon as your baby appears hungry. Usually your baby will wake up in their own bed after surgery. For a few hours, your baby will be under observation in the recovery area. Occasionally, babies may have a change in their breathing pattern for a few hours.

What are the complications and risks of the operation?

This surgery is usually very straightforward. However, there can be complications. Wound infection may occur, causing redness and discharge of pus at the site of the hernia repair. Antibiotics may be needed. Bruising and swelling at the site of hernia repair can be quite marked and can cause swelling in some babies. It usually resolves in a few days.

Occasionally, babies may have difficulty breathing after surgery and may appear to be breathing more deeply than normal. This may resolve with time.

What happens following surgery?

Milk feeds can be given as soon as your baby appears hungry. Usually your baby will wake up in their own bed after surgery. For a few hours, your baby will be under observation in the recovery area. Occasionally, babies may have a change in their breathing pattern for a few hours. Milk feeds can be given as soon as your baby appears hungry. Usually your baby should be ready to go home or to your local neonatal unit the next morning. Your baby will then be taken up and returned to a high dependency nursery.

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