Your child’s umbilical hernia

Paediatric Urology, Nicholls Ward

St George’s Healthcare NHS Trust
St George’s Hospital
Blackshaw Road
London
SW17 0QT
Tel: 020 8672 1255
Website: www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Written by St George’s Healthcare NHS Trust Paediatric Urology and Surgery Team
What is an umbilical hernia?
Umbilical hernia is a small bulge at the belly button which occurs very commonly in young boys and girls. They can be present without causing any difficulty for many years. After the age of 4 to 5 years the vast majority of hernias do not tend to resolve and a small number of patients require surgery.

What does the procedure involve?
The operation itself is very straightforward and although it is an anxiety to parents, it is a regular procedure that is performed by the paediatric surgeons within the department.

A small incision is made in the bellybutton and the hernia sac is dissected free away from the bellybutton itself. The hernia sac, which is like a sock of tissue, is opened. A small weakness in the muscle behind the bellybutton (which has not closed naturally) is then identified and closed with stitches. The bellybutton is then reconstructed.

What happens after the operation?
After the procedure the child could feel a little discomfort and pain around the bellybutton and regular pain relief is required. Overall the vast majority of children recover very well. Occasionally there can be a bit of bruising around the bellybutton and this may lead to some small scarring. All hernias can recur but umbilical hernias rarely do unless there has been a wound infection. Normally the child needs a few days away from school and then can return to normal activities as soon as they feel like it.

Contact details for the paediatrics surgery team:
5th Floor
Lanesborough Wing
St George’s Hospital
Blackshaw Road
London
SW17 0QT

Tel: 020 8725 3322
Fax: 020 8725 0711
Email: paediatricsurgerysecretaries@stgeorges.nhs.uk