

## Your child's umbilical hernia

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Information  
for parents

This leaflet provides information for parents whose child may have an umbilical hernia.

### 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.

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