

## Alaska Pediatric Surgery

### Patient Information Sheet:

#### Epigastric Hernia

Hernias in children are common. They're caused by an abdominal wall defect that is present at birth. Most often, the hernia forms in the groin or umbilical area. It can usually be felt as a bulge under the skin. Childhood hernias can be safely repaired using outpatient (same day) surgery. Best of all, most children recover quickly with only minor discomfort.

#### **Questions You May Have**

It's normal to have concerns about your child's surgery. Here are answers to some common questions:

**Is surgery safe?** Yes. Complications from hernia surgery are rare. In fact, most children get back to normal in a very short time.

**Will my child be in pain during surgery?** No. Your child will be given medications that make him or her sleep during surgery. The Anesthesiologist will speak with you and your family on the day of surgery regarding the plan for your child. Some mild discomfort after the operation is normal.

**Is surgery always needed?** Epigastric hernias in infants will not get better without surgery and repairing an epigastric hernia is safer than leaving it untreated.

#### **Preparing Your Child for Surgery**

Follow your doctor's advice to help get your child ready for surgery. You may be asked to:

Tell the doctor about any medications your child takes, including children's pain relievers.

Accompany your child during tests. These may include urine and blood tests.

In general, guidelines for eating prior to surgery are as follows:

8 hours before surgery: no more solid food – clear fluids only

6 hours before surgery: no more formula – clear fluids only

4 hours before surgery: nothing by mouth – no more breast milk or clear fluids

Our office will call and let you know the specific directions for your child.

#### **The Day of Surgery**

A health care provider will give your child an intravenous (IV) to provide fluids and medications. You'll then meet with the anesthesiologist. He or she will talk with you about the anesthesia used to prevent pain during surgery. The type of surgery your child has depends on the location of the hernia. If your child has a related problem, such as an undescended testicle, it may also be repaired at the same time as the hernia.

## **Repairing an Epigastric Hernia**

An incision is made in the skin above the hernia. Any protruding tissue is pushed back into place and the hernia sac is removed. The abdominal wall is then closed with sutures. The procedure usually takes about an hour.

## **Your Child's Recovery**

Your child can likely go home the same day as surgery. Don't worry if you notice some swelling or bruising. This is normal and should go away in a short time. To help speed recovery, encourage your child to move around. But children should avoid rough play for about a week. After that, it's okay to let them get back to doing things they enjoy. If you have questions or concerns, be sure to talk with the doctor during follow-up visits.

## **Risks and Complications:**

Epigastric hernia repairs for children are safe, but with every procedure there are some risks. These include:

- Bleeding
- Infection
- Risk of recurrence of the hernia
- Need for additional procedures
- Risk of damage to surrounding tissue
- Risks associated with anesthesia

## **When to call our office:**

After surgery, call our office if your child has any of the following:

A large amount of swelling or bruising. A small amount is normal, but if you are concerned please call us.

- Fever over 100.4°F (38.0° C)
- Increasing redness of drainage of the incision
- Bleeding
- Increasing pain
- Nausea or vomiting
- With any concerns you have.

**\*\*Call Alaska Pediatric Surgery with questions or concerns 929-7337\*\***