



North Valley Surgical Associates, PC

General & Minimally Invasive Surgery

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HERNIA REPAIR

WHAT IS A HERNIA?

A hernia is a protrusion or bulge, generally in the groin or umbilical region. It occurs when a portion of the tissue that lines the abdomen breaks through a weak area of the abdominal wall. This weakness is usually caused from excessive strain or may even be present at birth. Less frequently, a hernia may occur along a previous incision.

CAN A HERNIA GET BETTER?

The hernia cannot repair itself, nor can medicine cure the condition. The patient may choose to tolerate the pain and wear a truss. However, this can result in the bowel getting caught in the hernia - a serious and potentially life-threatening situation. Surgery is the only way to repair a hernia.

WHAT ARE MY OPTIONS?

The doctors of North Valley Surgical Associates utilize multiple techniques to repair hernias. Techniques vary from a standard repair (with or without mesh) to minimally invasive laparoscopic repairs.

With the mesh technique, the surgeon makes a small incision (approximately 4" long) over the site of the hernia. The bulge is returned to its proper position and a piece of fine mesh is placed at the opening in the abdominal wall. The mesh is firmly held in place with permanent internal sutures. The outer incision is then closed, usually with dissolvable sutures.

Laparoscopic hernia repair requires several small incisions (usually ¼" to ½" long) through the abdominal wall and the navel. A laparoscope (tiny telescope) connected to a camera is inserted, giving the surgeon an excellent view of the inside of the hernia. The tissue is pulled back into place and mesh or stitches are used to repair the abdominal wall.

Occasionally, usually due to prior surgery and scarring or other medical conditions, a patient may require traditional hernia surgery. Traditional surgery requires a larger incision to repair the herniated tissue. Because of the increased stress on the body, recover time is often longer (three to six weeks).

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF A MINIMALLY INVASIVE TECHNIQUE?

Because these techniques require small incisions and place less stress on internal tissues, patients experience much less postoperative pain than following traditional surgery. Patients are generally able to return home within a few hours of surgery. They heal faster, and many people are able to return to work in a couple of days. Normal daily activity may resume within a week and more strenuous activity within a few weeks.

This material is presented for information only. If you have concerns about your health, consult your personal physician.

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