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INCISIONAL HERNIA

What is an incisional hernia?

This is a hernia through a previous operation site. It can occur after any abdominal operation. It presents as a lump on the abdomen. This can be painful and sometimes the hernia will not be able to be pushed back in. Occasionally there are dangerous symptoms of severe pain, redness and vomiting. If this occurs urgent surgery is required

What is the treatment?

Surgery is often required. The procedure can be performed as an open operation or laparoscopically. The approach is different for different hernias and will be determined by Dr Pathma-Nathan. The defect is closed with mesh.

What are the complications?

The complication rate is low (1-2%).

1. Bleeding
2. Infection
3. Pain: There is always pain after the operation which lasts for a few weeks,
4. Abdominal organ injury: Because we are re-entering the abdominal cavity any of the structures nearby can rarely be injured. In addition there will be adhesions (scar) from the previous surgery.
5. Recurrence

What can I expect after the operation?

You will be able to walk immediately and climb stairs. You will require painkillers that you will be given in hospital.

When can I resume normal activities?

There will be no lifting allowed for 2 weeks. You can carry your plate and cup but not much more. After the initial 2 weeks there will be a further period of 2 weeks of light duties (no more than 5kg). These restrictions are to allow time for the mesh to secure into the muscle.

If you work at a desk without any lifting you can return to work in around a week. You can drive once you are no longer requiring strong (prescription) medication. If your work does involve lifting but has no light duties you will need the full 4 weeks off. Each patient's circumstances are different and certificates will be issued accordingly.