



Pediatric Surgical Associates, Ltd.

Patient and Family Education

## Umbilical Hernia

### What is an umbilical hernia?

An umbilical hernia is a bulge or protrusion that is seen or felt in the area of the belly button. This bulge is a result of a failure of the abdominal wall to completely close during development, leaving an opening for a portion of the intestine and fluid to come through. Umbilical hernias are present at birth but may become more noticeable when your child is crying, coughing, or straining to have a bowel movement. Umbilical hernias do not usually cause pain.

### Is it serious?

Not usually. It is rare, but in some cases, such as a large hernia, intestine may become trapped in the defect (incarcerated) and is unable to go back into the abdomen. If this happens it will often be painful, firm, and may be discolored. If your child has signs of an incarcerated hernia, your child should be seen in the emergency room right away to prevent damage to the intestine.

### Should the umbilical hernia be repaired as soon as possible?

Most umbilical hernias close on their own by the time the child is 4-5 years old. If the hernia has not closed by that time or it is a large hernia, your surgeon may recommend earlier repair.

### How is the hernia repaired?

Surgery to repair the hernia is a day procedure and is done under a general anesthesia. Your child will go home on the same day. A small curved incision will be made under your child's belly button. The

opening will be closed with dissolvable sutures and the overlying skin will be closed with surgical glue, or a combination of dissolvable sutures and surgical glue. Your child may have a clear plastic dressing over the site and can be removed 48 hours after the procedure. The surgical glue will start to peel off in 5-10 days.

### Recovery at home

Most children do well with the procedure. Pain can be controlled with Acetaminophen (Tylenol) or Ibuprofen (Motrin/Advil). Your child's belly button may be slightly swollen, but this will resolve in 7-14 days.

### When to call the doctor

- Fever of 101.5 degrees or higher
- Any signs of infection, including redness or drainage from the incision Pain that is not controlled with prescribed medications
- Any questions or concerns

### If you have questions

If you have questions or concerns, please call your child's doctor at Pediatric Surgical Associates at (612) 813-8000 or 1-800-992-6983.