



Parent Guide:

Inguinal Hernia in Children

📌 Overview – “What is it?”

- An **inguinal hernia** is a swelling/lump seen in the groin area (between tummy and thigh).
 - It happens when a small tunnel (present since the baby was in the mother’s womb) doesn’t close properly.
 - Through this tunnel, intestine (or sometimes ovary in girls) can slide down → causing a bulge in the groin or scrotum/labia.
 - 🧒 More common in boys than girls (about 3–10 times more).
 - 🍼 Premature babies have higher chances (up to 30%).
 - Sometimes parents confuse **hydrocele** (fluid collection in scrotum) with hernia, but hydrocele does not have intestine inside.
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👁️ Signs & Symptoms – “How can I notice it?”

- A **bulge in the groin or scrotum/labia** that:
 - Appears when your child **cries, coughs, or strains** 🚽
 - May disappear when your child relaxes or sleeps 🛌
- Usually **painless** in the beginning.

⚠️ But be alert for:

- **Incarcerated Hernia** (hernia gets stuck):
 - Bulge becomes hard, doesn’t go back in.

- Severe belly/groin pain.
 - Vomiting 🤮, swollen tummy, refusing to eat.
 - Fewer wet/dirty diapers.
 - **Strangulated Hernia** (blood supply cut off):
 - Bulge turns red/purple.
 - Child has extreme pain, inconsolable crying 😭.
 - Fever, sometimes blood in stool.
- 👉 These are emergencies — rush to hospital immediately! 🚑
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Diagnosis – “How will the doctor check?”

-  **Physical exam** – most hernias are diagnosed by simply examining the groin.
 -  Sometimes doctor may ask child to cough, cry, or blow a balloon to see the bulge.
 -  **Ultrasound** – if diagnosis is unclear, or to rule out other causes (like lymph node or mass).
 -  Blood tests – only if hernia is stuck/strangulated.
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Treatment – “How will my child get better?”

-  **Surgery (Hernia Repair)** is the only cure.
- Doctors usually recommend surgery soon after diagnosis to prevent emergency situations.

Types of Surgery

Open Repair

- Small cut in the groin.
- Intestine pushed back → hernia sac removed → skin closed with dissolvable stitches.

Laparoscopic Repair

- 2–3 tiny cuts + a camera.
- Both sides can be checked at the same time.
- Faster recovery, smaller scars.

Before Surgery

- Child should not eat/drink for 6–8 hours.
- Doctors give IV fluids + explain surgery to parents (consent).

After Surgery

- Recovery from anesthesia: 1–2 hours.
- Most children go home the **same day** (day-care surgery).
- Premature babies may be kept overnight for observation.
- Pain managed with pain killer (**paracetamol / ibuprofen**).

Risks vs Benefits

- **Benefits:** Prevents intestine damage, life-threatening blockage.
- **Risks (rare):** Swelling in scrotum, recurrence, injury to testicle blood supply, intestinal injury.
- 👉 Overall, success rates are very high (recurrence risk <1%).

Home Care After Surgery

✅ Do's

🍽️ Diet

- Start with light meals (khichdi, dal, curd rice).
- Regular diet can be given once child feels fine.
- Encourage fluids – water, coconut water, soup.

🚶 Activity

- Light play and walking within 1–2 days.
- School after 5–7 days (if doctor agrees).
- Normal play/sports after 2–3 weeks.

💡 Wound Care

- Keep incision dry for 48–72 hrs.
- After that, wash gently with soap and water.
- Daily check wound for redness, swelling, pus, bleeding.

💊 Medicines

- Give pain medicines as prescribed.
- Complete antibiotics (if prescribed).

📞 Call doctor immediately if:

- Fever $> 101^{\circ}\text{F}$ 🌡️
- Severe groin/belly pain 🤕
- Repeated vomiting 🤮
- Redness, pus, or bleeding from incision
- Child not eating/drinking or passing urine/stool

✖ Don'ts

🚫 Food

- No heavy, spicy, oily food for the first 2–3 days.
- Don't force-feed.

🚫 Activity

- No running, cycling, jumping, or rough play for 2–3 weeks.
- No heavy school bags for 2–4 weeks.

🚫 Wound

- Don't scratch or rub incision.
- Don't remove dressing unless advised.
- Daily bath and washing of wound with soap and water as advised.
- No swimming/tub baths until stitches healed.

🚫 Follow-up

- Don't skip follow-up visits (usually 2–6 weeks).
- Don't give over-the-counter medicines without doctor's advice.

☀ Quick Parent Tips

- Keep routine simple and stress-free.
- Reassure your child – surgery is common and safe.
- Involve siblings in gentle care (so child doesn't feel left out).
- Lots of hugs, comfort, and patience go a long way ❤

♥ Remember

With timely surgery, inguinal hernia in children is **completely treatable**. Your love, attention, and calm presence are the best support for your child's recovery.

Dr. Dhruv Mahajan

Consultant Pediatric Surgery

MBBS (AIIMS, New Delhi)

M.Ch Paediatric Surgery (AIIMS, New Delhi), FMAS

DrNB Paediatric Surgery (NBEMS), FIAGES, FALS (Robotic)