
PATIENT GUIDE

Hernia Repair

General Information



A clear, simple guide to understanding your hernia and its repair, covering what a hernia is, what surgery involves, and what to expect during recovery.

Under the care of **Dr Brad Bidwell** · MBBS, BSc.(Hons), PhD, FRACS

ABOUT THE CONDITION

What is a hernia?

A hernia occurs when part of the tissue or an organ inside the abdomen pushes through a weak spot in the surrounding muscle wall. This often appears as a bulge you can see or feel, which may be more noticeable when you cough, lift or strain. Common types include groin (inguinal), belly-button (umbilical) and incisional hernias.

Hernias do not heal on their own, and surgical repair is the reliable way to treat them. Repair relieves discomfort and reduces the risk of complications such as bowel becoming trapped. Dr Bidwell repairs the weak area and usually reinforces it with a soft **mesh**. Depending on your situation, this may be done through open surgery or with keyhole (laparoscopic or robotic) techniques, which he will discuss with you.

Why timing matters

Most hernias are repaired as planned surgery. Occasionally a hernia can become firm, painful and impossible to push back in, which may signal that tissue is trapped. This needs urgent medical attention, so it is important to understand the warning signs on the next page.

Before your surgery

GETTING READY

- At your consultation, Dr Bidwell will examine you, confirm the type of hernia and explain the recommended repair, the anaesthetic and the expected recovery.
- Tell the clinic about all medications, especially blood thinners and diabetes medications, as some may need to be paused or adjusted.
- If you smoke, stopping before surgery helps healing and lowers the risk of complications.

THE DAY BEFORE AND FASTING

- You will be told when to stop eating and drinking. An empty stomach is essential for a safe anaesthetic.
- Arrange for a responsible adult to drive you home and help you at home for the first day or two.

What to expect

- 1. Admission.** Come to the hospital at your scheduled time, having followed your fasting instructions. A nurse will prepare you for surgery and the anaesthetic team will meet you.
- 2. The operation.** Hernia repair is usually performed under general anaesthetic. Dr Bidwell repairs the weak area and reinforces it as planned. The operation commonly takes around 30 to 60 minutes, depending on the type and approach.
- 3. Going home.** Many hernia repairs are done as day surgery or with a short stay. You will be given pain relief and clear instructions before you leave.
- 4. Recovery.** Mild discomfort, bruising and swelling around the repair are normal and settle over the following days. You are encouraged to move gently and walk, which aids recovery.

Your recovery at home

Activity. Gradually increase your activity as comfort allows. Avoid heavy lifting and strenuous exercise for the period Dr Bidwell advises, usually a few weeks, to let the repair settle.

Wound care and follow-up. Keep the wound clean and dry as instructed. Some tenderness and a firm feeling under the wound is normal early on. A follow-up appointment will be arranged to check your healing.

When to seek help

Sedation and surgery are very safe, but contact the clinic or seek medical care promptly if, in the days afterwards, you experience:

- Increasing redness, swelling, warmth or discharge from the wound
- Fever, chills or feeling generally unwell
- Severe or worsening pain not eased by your pain relief
- A firm, very painful bulge that cannot be pushed back, especially with nausea or vomiting (seek urgent care)

If symptoms are severe or you are very unwell, call 000 or go to your nearest emergency department.

Contact the clinic

If you have any questions about your preparation, procedure or recovery, please get in touch, and the team will be happy to help.

Practice	Wangaratta General Surgeons
Location	Wangaratta Private Hospital, 134 Templeton Street, Wangaratta VIC 3677
Phone	(03) 5721 4366
Email	reception@drbradbidwell.com.au

This guide provides general information only and is not a substitute for personalised medical advice. Always follow the specific instructions given to you by Dr Bidwell and the clinic.