

# Types of Hernias

## Glossary



Hernias affect millions of people worldwide and can occur at any age. Although they are often not dangerous, hernias can cause discomfort and may require treatment to prevent serious complications. Read on to learn about the different types of hernias.

**Inguinal Hernia** (groin): Accounting for 75% of all hernias, inguinal hernias mostly affect men or people assigned male at birth (AMAB).<sup>1</sup> They occur when part of the bowel protrudes into the passageway that runs down the inner thigh (the inguinal canal).

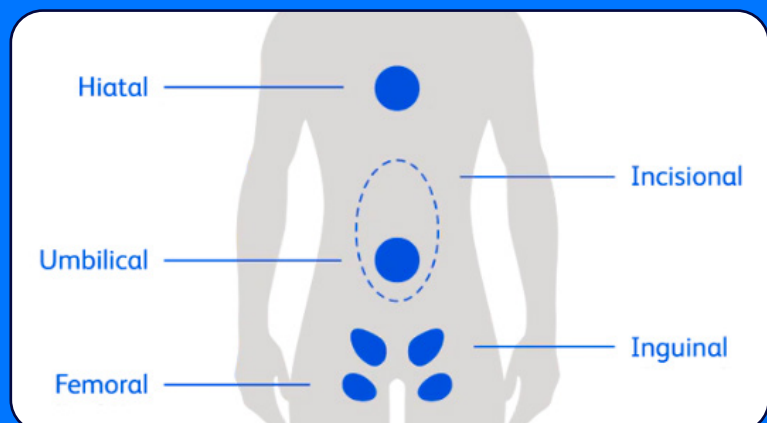
**Femoral Hernia** (thigh): A less-common type, femoral hernias only make up 2-4% of all groin hernias.<sup>2</sup> They occur when fatty tissue pokes through the area that runs underneath the inguinal canal (the femoral canal).

**Ventral Hernia:** Occurring in approximately 20% of adults, a ventral hernia is an umbrella term for a protrusion of intestine or other tissue through a weakness or gap in the abdominal wall.<sup>3</sup> The most common types of ventral hernias are:

- **Umbilical Hernia** (belly button): A mostly congenital condition (present from birth), they are more common in babies than adults, and usually disappear by age 5.<sup>4</sup> An umbilical hernia occurs when part of the intestine pokes through an opening in the abdominal wall near the belly button.
- **Incisional Hernia** (near the site of a scar from a previous surgery): A common side effect of abdominal surgery, an incisional hernia occurs when tissue protrudes through a former incision in the abdominal wall that weakened over time.

**Hiatal Hernia** (diaphragm): A common type of hernia, hiatal hernias occur when the opening in the diaphragm (the muscle where the esophagus passes through) widens and the top of the stomach pushes up through the opening into the chest. There are [4 types of hiatal hernias](#):

- **Type I (Sliding):** In a sliding hernia, the area where the esophagus meets the stomach—known as the gastroesophageal junction—and a portion of the stomach slide up into the chest through an opening in the diaphragm. This is the most common type of hiatal hernia, accounting for about 95% of cases.<sup>5</sup>
- **Type II (Rolling):** Also known as a paraesophageal hernia, a rolling hernia involves a portion of the stomach bulging through the diaphragm beside the esophagus, next to the gastroesophageal junction.
- **Type III (Mixed):** A mix of the Type I Rolling and Type II Sliding, a Type III Mixed hernia is formed when the part of your esophagus that connects your stomach slides up through the hiatus at times and another part of your stomach bulges through at times.<sup>6</sup>
- **Type IV:** An extremely rare paraesophageal hernia, Type IV is essentially a herniation of the entire stomach into the thorax (upside-down stomach orientation).<sup>5</sup>



**Sports Hernia:** Although symptoms are similar, a sports hernia is not actually a hernia—it is a painful, soft tissue injury that occurs in the groin area. A sports hernia (known by the medical community as Athletic Pubalgia) most often occurs during repetitive, explosive motions that require sudden changes of direction or intense twisting movements.<sup>7</sup>

**Situational Hernias:** Although some hernias may be present at birth or develop due to [risk factors](#) such as obesity or smoking, some hernias can result from situational factors, including:

- **Incarcerated Hernias:** In some instances, a hernia may become [incarcerated](#), which means the abdominal content is trapped and can no longer be pushed back into its natural place. Hernias may also become strangulated, where the blood flow is cut off, causing severe pain; nausea or vomiting may also develop.<sup>8</sup> Both situations can be very dangerous and require immediate medical attention.
- **Congenital Hernias:** There are two types of congenital hernias:
  - **Congenital umbilical hernias (CUH)** occur in about 15% of newborns, mostly in the umbilical/navel area.<sup>9</sup> A congenital umbilical hernia will often close on its own as your child grows, but sometimes it may not.<sup>10</sup>
  - **Congenital diaphragmatic hernias (CDH)**, which are far more severe and far less common than CUH, occur when there is a disruption in the formation of the diaphragm and a hole forms during a fetus's development in the womb. This can result in organs (like the bowel, stomach, or liver) moving into the chest cavity and can cause respiratory complications.<sup>11</sup>
- **Incisional Hernias:** After abdominal surgery, approximately 1 in 3 patients develop an [incisional hernia](#).<sup>12</sup> These hernias result from a weakening of the abdominal muscle due to a surgical incision and often to occur three to six months post-surgery but can happen at any time.
- **Spigelian Hernias:** A rare type of hernia, Spigelian Hernias, occurs when a slit-like opening occurs in the layer of tissue (spigelian fascia) that separates the two muscle groups at the front of the abdomen. It usually affects the intestines and layer of tissue that lies over the abdominal organs (omentum).

If you're concerned about the possibility of a hernia, [contact your doctor](#) or schedule a hernia consultation as soon as possible.

*The guidance provided in this article follows general rules that should be discussed with your doctor. This article is for informational and educational purposes only. It does not substitute for medical advice. If in doubt, always consult your doctor.*

1. <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/16266-inguinal-hernia> 2. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8521781/> 3. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9984720/> 4. <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/umbilical-hernia> 5. <https://casereports.bmj.com/content/14/9/e245887> 6. <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/8098-hiatal-hernia> 7. <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/hernias/sports-hernia> 8. <https://www.healthline.com/health/strangulated-hernia#hernia-types> 9. <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/15757-hernia> 10. <https://www.facs.org/for-patients/the-day-of-your-surgery/pediatric-umbilical-hernia/> 11. <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/congenital-diaphragmatic-hernia> 12. <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/hernias/incisional-hernia>