



NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S
When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.

Helping Hand™

Health Education for Patients and Families

Sports Medicine: Sports Hernia

A sports hernia is a complex injury to the soft tissues (muscles, tendons, and ligaments) in the lower belly (abdomen) and groin. This is where the stomach muscles join the pelvis. It can occur with a single event, but more often the injury occurs gradually over time.

Signs and Symptoms

- Dull, achy, pain in groin, lower abdomen, inner thigh, and in males, the testicles
- Pain with moving the hip, running, cutting, skating, or kicking
- Pain when trying to do sit-ups and abdomen crunches
- Groin pain when coughing or sneezing
- Pain that gets better with rest but comes back when activity starts again

Increased Risk

- Males
- Poor physical conditioning (strength and flexibility), coordination, or endurance
- High level of activity
- Sports that require repeated kicking or quick change of direction (soccer, hockey, football)

Treatment

- Medicine
 - Anti-inflammatory medicines, such as ibuprofen (Motrin® or Advil®) or naproxen (Aleve®) may be recommended. Take these as directed by your doctor or health care provider.
 - Other minor pain relievers, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) may be taken.

- Use of cold and heat
 - Cold should be applied for 10 to 15 minutes every 2 to 3 hours and after any activity that makes symptoms worse. Use ice packs or an ice massage and raise the foot and ankle at or above heart level to reduce swelling.
 - Heat may be used before doing stretching and strengthening activities prescribed by your doctor, health care provider, or athletic trainer. Use a heat pack or a warm soak. Apply for 10 to 15 minutes.
- Rest
 - Mild to moderate cases respond to rest. However, pain may come back when returning to high levels of activity.
- Exercises
 - Exercises to improve strength and flexibility of the hip and core are helpful. These can be done at home, but often a referral to a physical therapist or athletic trainer may be advised by your doctor or health care provider.
- Surgery
 - Surgery may be needed for pain and symptoms that do not improve.

How to prevent

- Do proper warm up and stretching before practice or competition.
- Complete rehab before returning to practice or competition.
- Maintain proper conditioning, hip and thigh flexibility, muscle strength and endurance, and cardiovascular fitness.

When to Call the Doctor

Call your doctor, health care provider, or the Sports Medicine team at (614) 355-6000 if:

- Symptoms get worse or do not improve in 2 weeks, even with treatment
- New, unexplained symptoms develop

To schedule an appointment with Sports Medicine, visit [NationwideChildrens.org/SportsMedicineScheduling](https://www.NationwideChildrens.org/SportsMedicineScheduling) or scan this code with your camera phone.

