

Hernia.

What is a Hernia?

Hernias of the abdominal wall come in a number of different varieties. In football players, the most common symptom is pain in the abdominal area (stomach) or groin (See Figure 1). The player will have difficulty running and changing direction while playing football, and sometimes coughing and sneezing is painful. Pain from a hernia can be confused with pain due to chronic conditions encountered football, such as groin pain. Hernias can occur suddenly, such as when twisting sharply during a game or gradually over time (See Figure 2; Hernia).



Figure 2: Hernia.

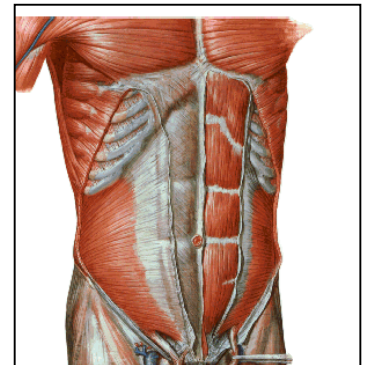


Figure 1: Abdomen

Hernias come in three varieties:

Inguinal.

This is a protrusion of the bowel through the abdominal wall. It will appear as a swelling in the groin area. Most hernias are inguinal. Symptoms are pain in the groin when the player exercises or pain when the player coughs or sneezes.

Femoral Hernia.

Femoral hernias are uncommon and will look like a swelling in the upper thigh, with pain in the groin when the player exercises, or coughs or sneezes.

Abdominal Hernia.

Hernias in the abdomen can also cause pain to radiate down into the groin. The player will need to see a sports doctor to confirm if they have a hernia or not. The symptoms are comparable to those of inguinal and femoral hernias.

What can the player do about it?

The player should see a sports doctor if they suspect a hernia. Usually it will not get better through simply rest.

What can a sports doctor do about it?

Generally, if the hernia is not healing and pain is persisting, the sports doctor will recommend an operation. If the abdominal wall is ruptured, it will not get better by resting and surgery will be needed. The recovery after the operation and return to playing football will depend on the extent of the hernia and type of surgery the player has.