

Health Awareness

Talk Hernia To Me: Advice For Effective Consultations With Your Doctor

(NAPS)—An estimated 5 million people in the U.S. have a hernia, yet many struggle to effectively talk with their doctor about symptoms and potential treatment options—but that can be changed.

The Problem

A recent Pollfish survey of 500 hernia patients found 77% endured a negative experience when speaking with their doctor about their condition.

Still, people seek treatment. Approximately 1 million hernia surgeries are performed each year. Of those, 90% are repaired with mesh, which has come under heavy scrutiny due to recalls, lawsuits and a rampant spread of misinformation.

As a result, many patients try to self-educate and understand their available options prior to consulting with their doctor. To help these people find the appropriate care, a group of leading hernia surgeons aided in the development of AboutHernia.com, a comprehensive educational resource supporting patients from research to recovery.

Here, these surgeons share their insight to help hernia patients overcome three of the most awkward and difficult topics typically encountered during a consultation:

1. The Bulge and Body Image. “The first time you see a large bulge protruding through the skin of your abdomen or groin it can be a frightening experience, and negatively impact your self-confidence,” says Dr. Samir S. Awad, Professor of Surgery & Vice Chair of Surgical Quality and Safety at Baylor College of Medicine. “While it may be uncomfortable, please share your body image concerns as you may be able to be fitted for a hernia belt, which has helped many patients hide the appearance of the bulge during the ‘watchful waiting’ period.”

2. Emotional Wellness. “Between the legal ads on TV combined with social media’s influence, the amount of negativity and misinformation patients are exposed to is mind blowing,” said Dr. Michael Sawyer, Surgeon



You don't have to put up with the pain and embarrassment of having a hernia. Your doctor can help.

at MMG Bariatrics in Lawton, OK. “I’ve witnessed positive results by tailoring my educational approach with the help of an interactive guide that allows patients to share their fears and concerns more effectively.” You can use the interactive SCAFFOLD guide at <https://abouthernia.outgrow.us/SCAFFOLD-Guide-hernia-patients> to prepare for your next appointment.

3. Mesh-Trust Issues: What are the Alternatives? “Almost all of my patients start the consult by saying whatever you do, please don’t use that expletive hernia mesh,” said Dr. Paul Szotek, Founder and CEO of the virtual Indiana Hernia Center. “To decrease treatment anxiety, I offer patients an active role via a shared decision-making model which has shown to not only improve satisfaction and compliance but, most importantly, provide promising outcomes.”

While hernias are typically not life-threatening conditions, if you are experiencing persistent flu-like symptoms, shooting pains or inability to move your bowels or pass gas, you’d be wise to seek immediate medical attention.