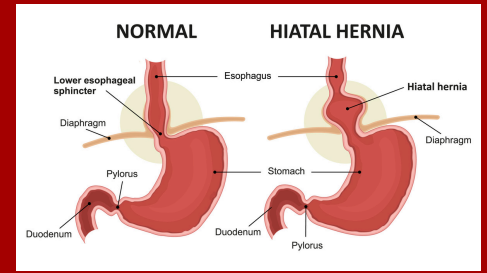




**ROCHESTER  
GENERAL  
SURGERY**



## What is a hiatal hernia?

A hiatal hernia is when a part or all of your stomach moves through your diaphragm up into your chest cavity.

## What are symptoms of a hiatal hernia?

Symptoms include heartburn, food regurgitation, chest or upper abdominal pain, feeling of fullness, or even difficulty breathing.

## What testing is needed?

Your surgeon may want a special X ray, or upper GI, where you drink a thick, white liquid and a series of X rays watches the fluid move down your esophagus and into your stomach. This will look at how well liquid moves through the hernia. An endoscopy, or EGD, is needed where a camera looks for any other abnormalities inside the upper GI tract prior to surgery. Lastly, you may need esophageal manometry, or a special test to measure esophageal contractions after you swallow.

## Who needs surgery?

Not all hiatal hernias require surgery. Symptoms of small hiatal hernias including acid reflux can be managed by medication. Large hernias or those with persistent symptoms despite medical therapy require surgery.

## Can you explain the surgery?

Surgery is performed minimally invasive, either laparoscopic or robotically. Surgery involves pulling the stomach back into the abdominal cavity and tightening the hiatus, which is an opening in the diaphragm that separates the chest from the abdominal cavity.

## What is recovery like?

You will be kept in the hospital for 1-2 days after surgery. You will have an upper GI test the day after surgery to look at the repair. If everything looks good you will be started on a liquid diet. You can expect some post-op pain that can be managed with medication. Once discharged from the hospital most people are kept on a liquid or soft diet for a period of time determined by your surgeon.

# What are possible surgical complications?

**All** surgeries have potential complications. Bleeding, infection, pneumothorax (lung collapse), damage to nearby organs including esophageal or gastric perforation, difficulty swallowing, bloating, diarrhea, or recurrence of the hiatal hernia and reflux can all happen during and after a hiatal hernia repair.