

Nobody Told Me About...Hernias

[00:00:00] Hello, and welcome back to Leaks, Laughs, and Life with a Urostomy. I'm your host, Dawn.

[00:00:06] Today, we're kicking off a brand-new series called Nobody Told Me, where I'll be talking about the things that probably should be mentioned before and after bladder removal surgery, but somehow they've gotten forgotten and weren't mentioned.

[00:00:21] And we are starting with one that nobody really puts front and center, and it's not very glamorous, but here we go. Hernias. Like I said, it's not the glamorous side of urostomy life, I know, but this is one of those topics that quietly shows up in the background of every recovery and can affect you a lot more than you realize.

[00:00:42] Before we jump in, a quick reminder that I am not a doctor. I'm just a woman without a bladder sharing what I've learned through my own journey, a lot of research, and plenty of trial and error. What worked for me may not work for everyone, so please always check with your [00:01:00] healthcare team when it comes to your own medical care.

[00:01:03] All right, let's get into it. After bladder removal surgery and urostomy creation, your abdominal area, it's kind of tricky to say, has been through a major overhaul. So there's healing, there's scar tissue, there's muscle disruption, and a stoma site that becomes a permanent part of our body's new design.

[00:01:25] And because of that, hernias can become a real concern for some people, especially peristomal hernias, which form near the stoma. A hernia is basically when tissue or part of the intestine pushes through a weak spot in the muscle wall. And once you hear that description, it makes a whole lot more sense why we need to be mindful near the abdominal area.

[00:01:51] What nobody told me up front was how long-term this conversation was actually going to be.

[00:01:57] It is not just about the first [00:02:00] few weeks after surgery. It can be something you continue to think about for months and even years later. That is the part that catches people off guard, and it's not always one big moment that causes it.

[00:02:13] Sometimes it's the small stuff, like something, mm, lifting something just a little bit too heavy, twisting too quickly, thinking, "I'm feeling fine now," and just doing a bit too much.

[00:02:27] And I say this because I've been there, and most of us will have gone there.

[00:02:33] Recovery has this weird way of making you feel better physically before your body is actually ready for everything your brain wants to do, and that disconnect is wherein the problems lie.

[00:02:45] One of the hardest parts for me personally was the restriction phase after surgery. No lifting, no bending, no twisting, no vacuuming. Basically, not doing anything that made me feel like a functioning adult in my own home. [00:03:00] And if you're used to being independent, that part can feel really frustrating and even a little maddening.

[00:03:07] But there is a reason they tell you this. Your abdominal wall needs time, real time, not rushed time, not, "Oh, I feel okay, so I must be healed" time. Because once that support structure is compromised, it does not always announce itself loudly. Sometimes it's very subtle at first. There's a little bulge, a change in how your pouch fits on your abdomen, a feeling of pressure or heaviness or soreness, or things just not sitting the way they used to, and that's why paying attention matters.

[00:03:43] Your body will usually tell you when something feels off, and the trick is to actually listen to it before you convince yourself, "Ah, it's nothing." Because once you pass the point of no return, you are, well, I'm going to say this bluntly, screwed.[00:04:00]

[00:04:01] Now let's talk prevention, because this is where you do have some influence.

[00:04:06] Be mindful with your lifting, not in a fearful way, just in a smart way.

[00:04:12] For instance, use good body mechanics like bending at the knees, avoiding strain when you can, and ease into exercise slowly. No lifting weights, and later, only if they are like under 15 to 20 pounds total. You'll need to check with your surgeon on this one, but that's what I was told. Everybody is different.

[00:04:34] Support your core when you move, and yes, I'm going to say it, lifting the laundry basket does not need to be heroic. Have someone else do it for you. Or like I did, get a rolling one. No lifting.

[00:04:48] There is no prize for lifting something that is too heavy too soon except a hernia, and that is no prize.

[00:04:56] As for exercise, when you are ready for it, [00:05:00] it is absolutely important. Begin with walking and gentle movement, rebuilding your strength over time. That's all a part of the recovery process.

[00:05:10] But aggressive core work too early or trying to jump back into old routines too fast is where most people get into trouble.

[00:05:18] This is one of those things that I wish had been explained more in depth and more clearly in the beginning, not just being told to avoid heavy lifting, but the why behind it. Because once you understand the why, you begin to make different choices.

[00:05:36] Nobody told me how long I would still need to think about protecting my core. Nobody told me it would become part of my everyday awareness, and nobody told me that healing is not just about feeling better, but it's about building strength back in a slow, steady way that lasts.

[00:05:53] And at the end of the day, this is not about living in fear of movement or avoiding life. It's more about [00:06:00] being aware and being informed and giving your body the respect it deserves after everything it's been through.

[00:06:08] Your recovery is not a race, it's not a competition, and is definitely not something you need to rush through just to prove a point.

[00:06:17] Slow is still progress, and protecting your body now can save you a lot of frustration later.

[00:06:26] Thanks for hanging out with me today on Leaks, Laughs, and Life with a Urostomy, and the very first episode in the "Nobody Told Me..." series.

[00:06:34] If this episode helped you, please share it with someone who might need it, or if you have your own nobody told me moment, please share it with me.

[00:06:43] You can either connect with me on social media where I share more real-life moments, tips, and honest conversations about life with urostomy. And you can also email me from my website where you will find more podcast episodes and links to my books, Leaks, Laughs, and Life with a Urostomy: The [00:07:00] Handbook, and my journal, my plot twist journal at leakslaughslife.com.

[00:07:06] Until next time, take care of yourself, and thank you for listening. It means more than you know. Bye for now.