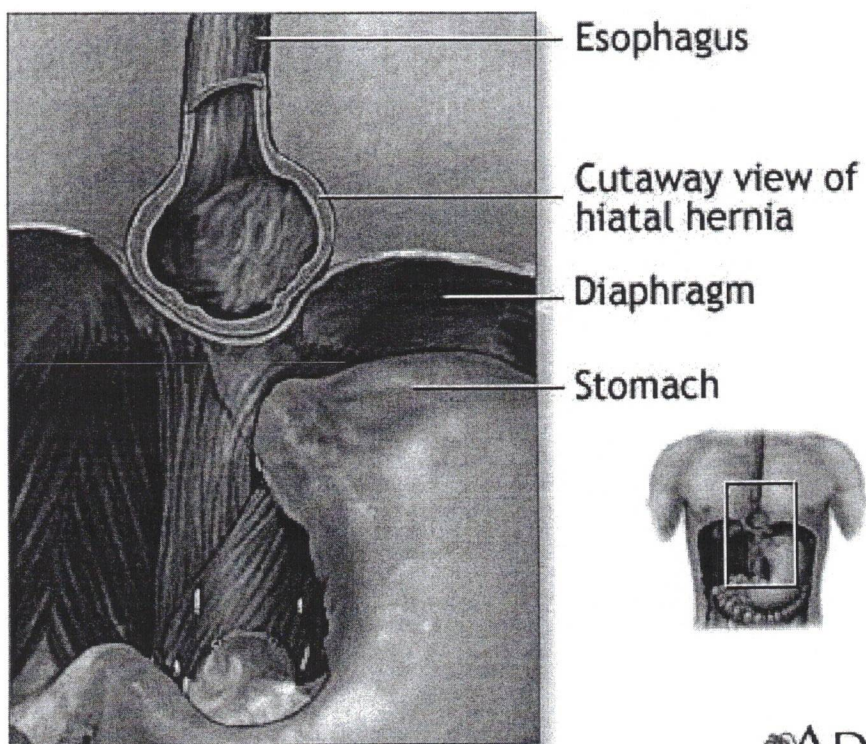


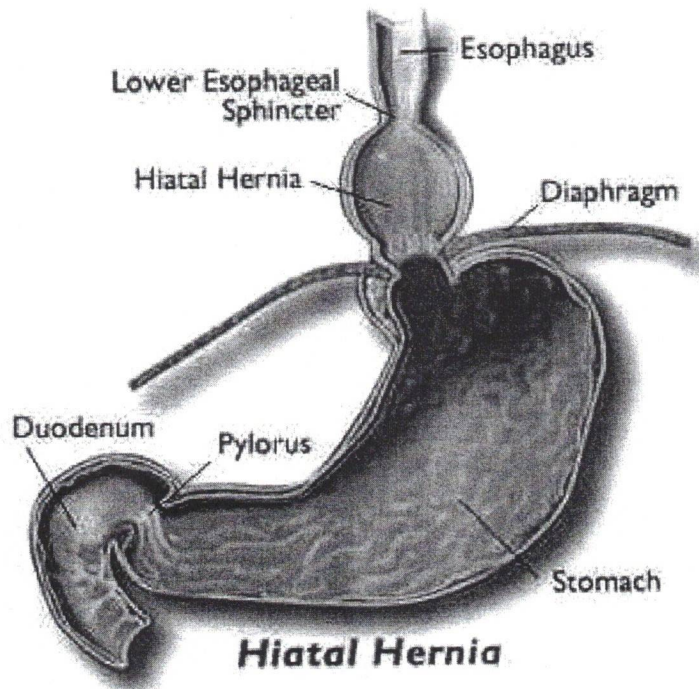
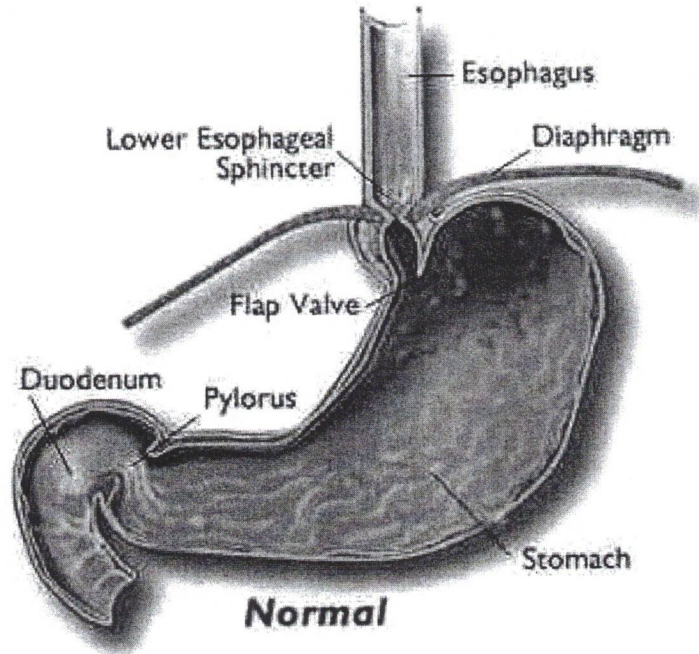
HIATAL HERNIA



ADAM.

WHAT IS A HIATAL HERNIA

A hiatal hernia is when part of the stomach protrudes through the diaphragm and up into the chest. In individuals with hiatal hernias, the opening of the esophageal hiatus (hiatal opening) is larger than normal, and a portion of the upper stomach slips up or passes (herniates) through the hiatus and into the chest.



WHAT CAUSES A HIATAL HERNIA?

- Coughing
- Vomiting
- Sudden physical exertion
- Pregnancy
- Abnormally loose attachment of esophagus to the diaphragm (which allows the esophagus and stomach to slip upwards)
- Permanent shortening of the esophagus (caused by inflammation and scarring from reflux or regurgitation of stomach acid)
- Obesity

SYMPTOMS OF HIATAL HERNIA

Most people who have a hiatal hernia have no symptoms. One symptom you may have is heartburn. If you have symptoms that are severe, you have gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD).

DIAGNOSING A HIATAL HERNIA

A hiatal hernia often is diagnosed when you see your doctor or have tests for another health problem.

If you have symptoms, your doctor will ask you questions about them. If your symptoms happen often and are severe, you may have GERD. If this is the case, your doctor may do more tests or give you medicine for the GERD.

TREATMENTS FOR A HIATAL HERNIA

If you have no symptoms:

- You won't need treatment

If you have mild symptoms:

- Change eating habits – smaller meals
- Wait 2-3 hours after eating before lying down
- Avoid chocolate, caffeine and alcohol
- Avoid spicy foods and foods that contain a lot of acid (tomatoes and oranges)
- Do not smoke or chew tobacco
- Do not wear tight fitting clothing around your middle
- Lose weight if you need to (sometimes even 5-10 lbs helps)

WHEN SURGERY IS NECESSARY

Treatment of large para-esophageal hernias causing symptoms requires surgery. During surgery, the stomach is pulled down into the abdomen, the esophageal hiatus is made smaller, and the esophagus is attached firmly to the diaphragm. This procedure restores the normal anatomy.

Since sliding hiatal hernias rarely cause problems themselves but rather contribute to acid reflux, the treatment for patients with hiatal hernias is usually the same as treatment for GERD. If GERD is severe, complicated, or unresponsive to medications, surgery is often performed. The repair is similar to the repair of para-esophageal hernias. However, in addition, part of the upper stomach is wrapped around the lower sphincter to augment the pressure at the sphincter and further prevent acid reflux.