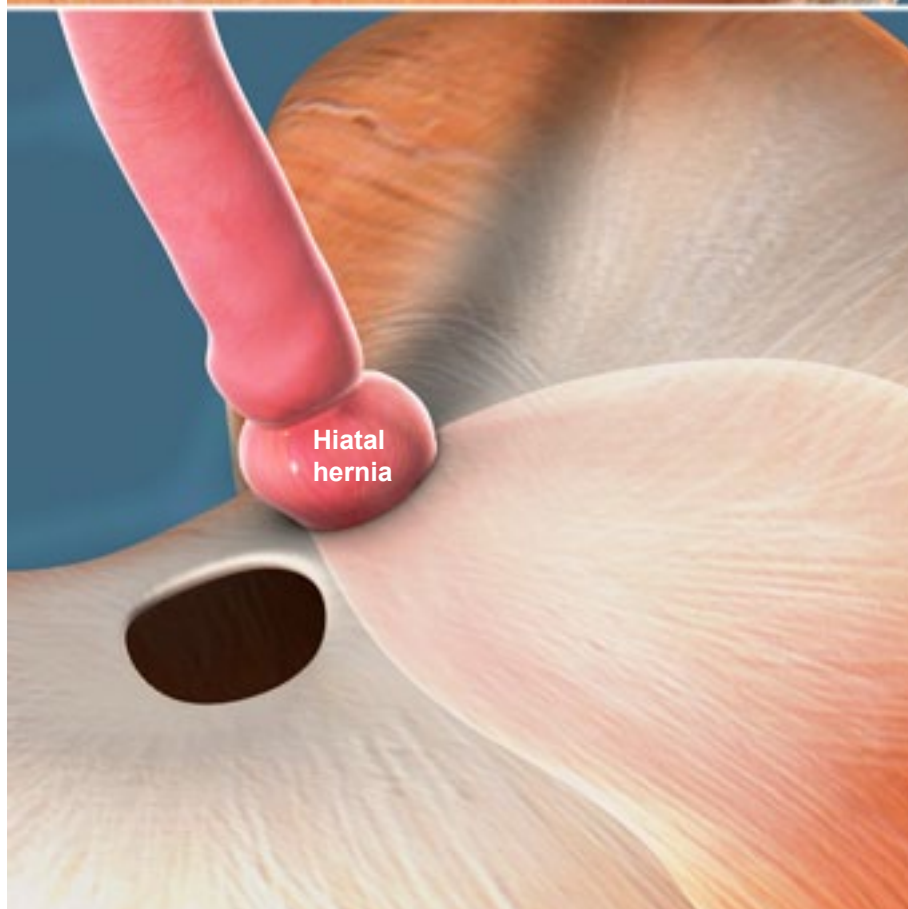
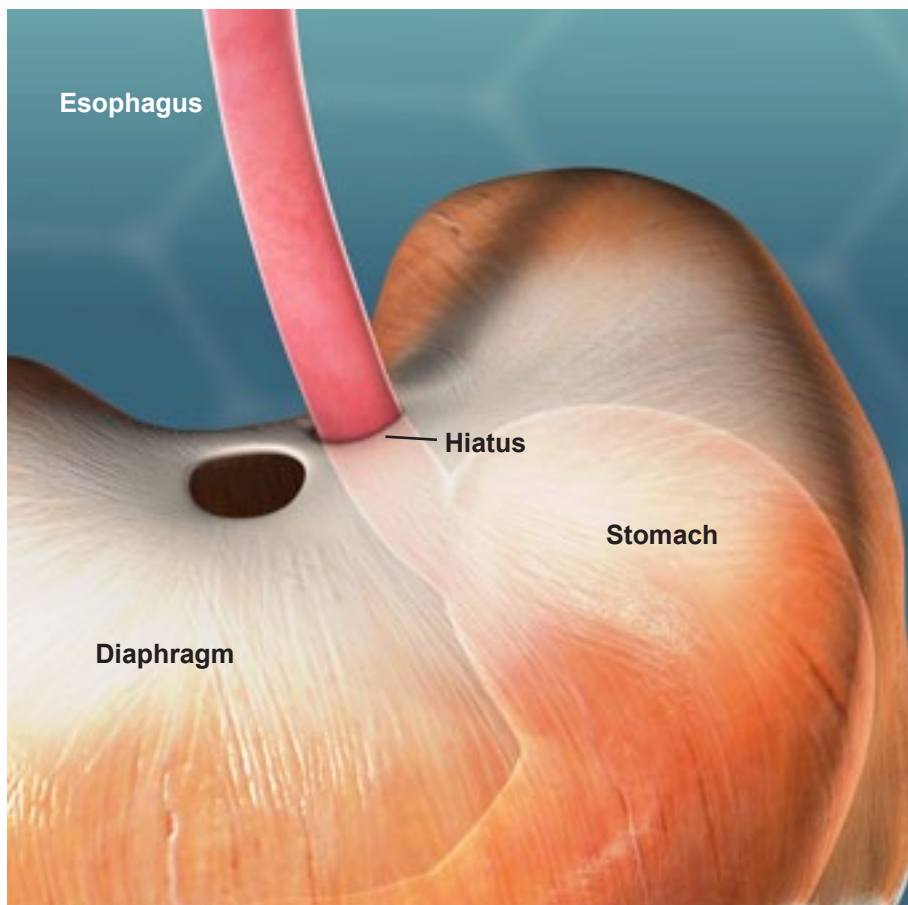


Hiatal Hernia



Overview

This condition develops when part of your stomach pushes up through an opening in your diaphragm called the "hiatus." The diaphragm separates your chest from your abdominal cavity. The hiatus is the opening that your esophagus passes through.

Causes and Risk Factors

If the muscle tissue around your hiatus is not strong enough, or if your hiatus is abnormally large, a hiatal hernia can form. It can be caused by lifting heavy objects. It can be caused by coughing or by straining when you move your bowels. It can be caused by injury. It can also develop because of a problem with the structure of your diaphragm. Obesity increases your risk for this type of hernia. It is also more common in people who are older.

Symptoms

Symptoms may include heartburn and chest pain. You may have difficulty swallowing, and you may belch. You may feel uncomfortably full after you eat a meal. You may also have bleeding in your digestive tract. This can cause you to vomit blood. You may pass stools that appear black.

Treatment

Treatment options may include medications and weight loss. You may benefit from modifications to your diet and to the way you eat. If these are not helpful, you may benefit from a surgical procedure to repair your hernia. Your healthcare provider can create a care plan that is right for your needs.