

## Health - Umbilical Hernia

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The umbilical cord is the tube, which attaches the puppy fetus to the mama through the placenta. A hernia is a hole or a too large opening in the body.

Umbilical hernias are the most common hernia in canines. An umbilical hernia is a bulging outward or protrusion of the abdominal lining (belly) through an area around the belly button. In canine's this may involve part of the intestines coming through the abdominal wall in the navel area. (The navel area is located in the mid-abdominal area.) Umbilical hernias more commonly consist of fatty tissue protruding through the abdominal wall.

Umbilical hernias, in canines, are usually congenital – secondary to flawed development. (This cause is said to be inherited.) Another cause is the mama dog biting off the umbilical cord too closely or roughly while whelping the puppy.

Veterinarians easily discover an umbilical hernia upon physical exam of the puppy. It is noted that an umbilical hernia may not be immediately noticeable. The abdominal contents may not protrude consistently – they may reduce spontaneously or when the area is pressed on.

The symptom of an umbilical hernia is a soft swelling in the navel (umbilical) area. It is not considered critical unless the opening is large enough to allow organs or intestines to protrude. Most umbilical hernias are not serious. Small umbilical hernias have been noted to close spontaneously by the age of 6 months. For this reason, many vets will recommend waiting until the puppy is 6 months of age before repairing surgically.

