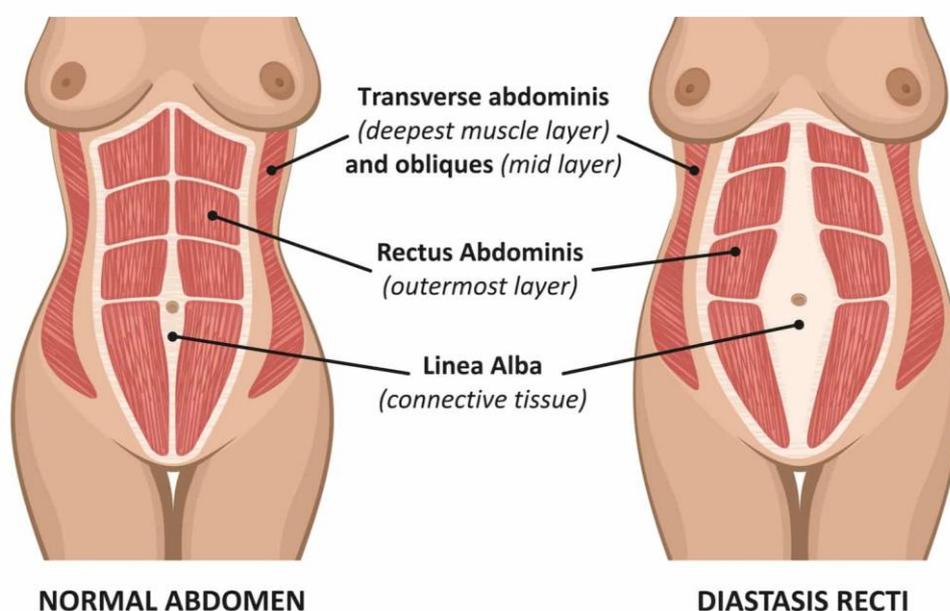


Diastasis Recti (Abdominal Muscle Separation)

DIASTASIS RECTI



What is Diastasis Recti?

Diastasis recti is a condition where the two sides of the **rectus abdominis** (the “six-pack” muscles) separate along the midline of the abdomen. This occurs due to stretching and thinning of the connective tissue (linea alba) between the muscles.

It is **common during and after pregnancy**, but can also affect men and women who have experienced significant weight changes, abdominal strain, or previous abdominal surgery.

What Causes Diastasis Recti?

- Pregnancy (especially multiple pregnancies or large babies)
 - Hormonal changes causing connective tissue to soften
 - Rapid weight gain or loss
 - Poor core muscle control
 - Heavy lifting with poor technique
 - Chronic coughing or constipation
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Common Symptoms

- A visible bulge or dome in the middle of the abdomen (especially when sitting up or straining)
- Feeling of weakness or poor core stability
- Lower back pain
- Pelvic pain or discomfort
- Poor posture
- Difficulty with lifting or daily activities

Some people may have **no pain**, only a change in appearance.

How is Diastasis Recti Diagnosed?

A healthcare professional or physiotherapist can assess diastasis recti by:

- Physical examination
- Measuring the gap between the muscles (often using finger widths)

Scans are **rarely needed** unless another condition is suspected.

Is Diastasis Recti Serious?

Diastasis recti is **not dangerous** and is not a hernia. However, if left untreated it may contribute to:

- Ongoing back or pelvic pain
- Reduced abdominal strength
- Increased risk of injury during lifting

Treatment and Management

Physiotherapy (Main Treatment)

A physiotherapist can guide you through safe and effective exercises to:

- Improve deep core muscle activation
- Strengthen abdominal and pelvic floor muscles
- Improve posture and movement patterns

Helpful Strategies

- Learn correct lifting and movement techniques
- Improve posture
- Use abdominal support if advised
- Gradually return to exercise

Exercises to Focus On (With Guidance)

- Deep abdominal (transversus abdominis) activation
- Pelvic floor exercises
- Controlled functional movements

Avoid Initially

- Sit-ups or crunches
- Planks (unless modified and supervised)
- Heavy lifting
- Exercises that cause abdominal bulging or doming

Will It Get Better?

Yes. With the right exercises and advice, many people see **significant improvement** in strength, function, and appearance. Recovery time varies and may take several months.

When to Seek Further Advice

Speak to your GP or physiotherapist if:

- You have ongoing pain
 - The abdominal bulge is worsening
 - You are unsure which exercises are safe
 - You suspect a hernia (painful lump that does not reduce)
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Key Points to Remember

- Diastasis recti is common and treatable
- Exercise should be **gentle, targeted, and progressive**
- Avoid straining the abdomen early on
- Physiotherapy support is very effective

