Premier Surgical physicians Dr. Joel “Trey” Bradley and Dr. Kristopher Williams specialize in abdominal wall reconstruction for complex hernia patients. The pair were fellowship-trained at the internationally-known Carolinas Medical Center in Charlotte, North Carolina, and work as a team on many of these challenging cases.
Hernias
An abdominal wall hernia is a weakness or hole in the abdominal muscles through which organs or tissue may protrude. This may be the result of a defect in the abdominal wall at birth, a weakness which has developed over time, or from an injury or a previous surgical incision. Hernias can affect men, women and children of all ages and body types.

There are several types of hernias, which are typically defined by location. The most common types are inguinal, umbilical and incisional. An inguinal is the most common type of hernia and is found in the groin area. Another common type is an umbilical hernia and is located around the navel. Incisional hernias arise at sites of previous abdominal surgery. Smoking, obesity, chronic pulmonary issues, immunosuppression and other ongoing medical problems can put you at higher risk of developing an incisional hernia.

For common small hernias, the hole or weakness is often repaired using a mesh material to reinforce and support the weakened area. A hernia may be repaired using an open or laparoscopic technique. For non-complex hernias, the repair is usually performed as outpatient surgery and patients can normally go home the same day.

Complex Hernias – Abdominal Wall Reconstruction
In cases of multiple previous failed hernia repairs, catastrophic injury to the abdominal wall, or for very large hernia defects, advanced hernia repair techniques may be required in order to adequately reconstruct the abdominal wall.

The goal of complex hernia repair with abdominal wall reconstruction is to repair the hernia defect and reinforce the abdominal musculature to prevent recurrences or other hernias from developing in the future. Complex abdominal hernia repair also aims to recover abdominal wall functionality, prevent intraabdominal organs from protruding through the abdominal wall, and provide a cosmetically-pleasing appearance which will last a lifetime.

Patients can expect to be hospitalized an average of 5 days following complex open hernia repair. You will be encouraged to get out of bed and walk soon after surgery, but it may be 4-6 weeks before you are fully able to resume normal activities.

Preparing for Complex Hernia Surgery
Factors like smoking, obesity, uncontrolled diabetes, poor nutrition and previous wound infections can increase the risk of hernia recurrence and post-operative wound complications following complex hernia surgery. Our surgeons counsel hernia patients before surgery to help eliminate these known risk factors. Smoking cessation, adequate control of diabetes, weight management, and proper nutrition are important elements for achieving a successful, lifelong hernia repair.

Talk to your physician about whether you may be a candidate for complex hernia repair. A lasting, successful result can greatly improve your mobility and quality of life.

The end result of this complex abdominal wall reconstruction is a restored, physiologic and functional abdominal wall with enough strength and flexibility to withstand physical activity and to improve quality of life. When performed properly by specially trained surgeons, complex hernia repair generally has a low rate of recurrence, resulting in a long-term functional repair with an esthetically-improved result.