

Congenital Heart Defects

Also called: congenital heart disease, cyanotic heart disease, heart defects, congenital cardiovascular malformations

Congenital heart defects are the most common type of major birth defect affecting 8 of every 1,000 newborns. Each year, more than 35,000 babies in the United States are born with congenital heart defects. There are many different types of congenital heart defects and range from simple defects with no symptoms to complex defects with severe, life-threatening symptoms.

Congenital heart defects are problems with the structure of the heart and can involve the interior wall of the heart, valves inside the heart or the arteries and veins that carry blood to the heart or out to the body. Congenital heart defects can change the normal flow of blood through the heart. The blood flow can slow down, go in the wrong direction or to the wrong place, or be blocked completely.

Treatment for a congenital heart defect can include medicines, surgery and other medical procedures, and heart transplants. Treatment also depends on the type and severity of the defect and a child's age, size, and general health. Over the past few decades, the diagnosis and treatment of these complex defects have greatly improved. Today, many children born with complex congenital heart defects grow to adulthood and lead productive lives because their heart defects have been effectively treated.

NOTE: This Web page was compiled from a variety of sources including the online resources of Medline Plus, the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, the National Institute of Health and other resources listed below, but is not intended to substitute or replace the professional medical advice you receive from your physician. The content provided here is for informational purposes only, and was not designed to diagnose or treat a health problem or disease. Consult your health care provider with any questions or concerns you may have regarding this specific condition.

Resources

NOTE: This page contains links to other World Wide Web sites with information about this disorder. The Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) hopes you find these sites helpful, but please remember the DHSS does not control nor does it necessarily endorse the information presented on these Web sites.

For a complete list of resources related to birth defects, including state programs and resources, support groups and not-for-profit organizations click on the following link.

<http://www.health.mo.gov/living/families/genetics/birthdefects/resources.php>

- [Genetic Alliance](#)
- [March of Dimes](#)
- [MedlinePlus](#)
- [Mayo Clinic](#)

- [National Institutes of Health](#)

Genetic Tertiary Centers

How to Obtain Genetic Services

Your family physician can usually provide information regarding genetic services in your area. Genetic clinics are periodically held in a location near you. For information, contact one of the centers listed below.

[Cardinal Glennon Children's Medical Center](#)

St. Louis, Missouri 314-577-5639

[Children's Mercy Hospital](#)

Kansas City, Missouri 816-234-3290

[St. Louis Children's Hospital](#)

St. Louis, Missouri 314-454-6093