




CONGENITAL HEART DEFECTS

What you need to know



What is a congenital heart defect?

- Congenital heart defects (CHD) are present at birth and occur when a baby's heart does not develop or function the way it should.
- Congenital heart defects are the most common type of birth defect.
- 1 in 100 babies are born with a heart defect each year in the United States.
- Over 1,000,000 adults are living with a congenital heart defect.
- 90% of children born with a congenital heart defect survive into adulthood.

What are the long-term considerations?

- Heart valve issues can arise.
- Pulmonary hypertension is common with certain defects.
- CHD predisposes you to arrhythmias.
- Anxiety and depression are more common among people with CHD.
- Endocarditis is more likely if you have a CHD.
- Heart failure is more common among patients with CHD.
- Surgery is often needed to correct significant CHD.
- Certain types of CHD predispose patients to stroke.



How do I live with a congenital heart defect?

- Learn about your heart defect, and don't hesitate to ask questions.
- Ask your doctor if it is safe to become pregnant.
- Find positive emotional support, as needed.
- Keep your medical appointments, even if you are not feeling unwell.
- Stay in contact with your cardiologist through adulthood.
- Know your health insurance options.
- Maintain good dental health and regular dental checkups.