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Pregnancy and Congenital Heart Disease Questions You Could Ask Your Doctor

Congenital heart disease (CHD) is a range of conditions present at birth and can affect the structure of a baby's heart and the way it works. CHD is the most common form of birth defect affecting about 40,000 babies each yearⁱ. Talk to your doctor early about your baby's risk for a congenital heart defect and how you can monitor it during your pregnancy.

Questions to ask your OB-GYN physician about congenital heart disease if you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant.

What are the risk factors for congenital heart disease?

The risk of having a baby with CHD depends on a variety of factors including your family history or environmental exposure.ⁱⁱ Additionally, a CHD may occur even when there aren't any risk factors present.

Are there ways to check for congenital heart disease while I am still pregnant?

A physician may be able to evaluate the chambers of the baby's heart during a woman's 20-week anatomy scan.ⁱⁱⁱ

How can I support my baby's heart health during my pregnancy?

What's good for mom is good for baby. When women take care of their cardiovascular health by doing things like eating a nutritious diet, staying active, managing their blood pressure and cholesterol levels, and not smoking or vaping their babies get their best start at life.^{iv}

After my baby is born, what tests are done to check their heart health?

A pulse oximetry test screens newborns for CHD. A pulse oximeter machine is placed on the baby's skin and estimates the amount of oxygen in a baby's blood. The test is painless and takes only a few minutes.^v

To learn more about CHDs and the risk factors visit heart.org/chd.

The Children's Heart Foundation and the American Heart Association are proud to join forces to raise awareness and advance lifesaving research for congenital heart defects.



[i] Centers for Disease Control Data and Statistics on Congenital Heart Defects <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/heartdefects/data.html>
[ii] American Heart Association – Understanding Your Risk Factors for CHD <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/congenital-heart-defects/understand-your-risk-for-congenital-heart-defects>
[iii] Screening for fetal congenital heart disease <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5367993/>
[iv] Go Red for Women – Having a healthy pregnancy <https://www.goredforwomen.org/en/know-your-risk/pregnancy-and-maternal-health/having-a-healthy-pregnancy>
[v] CDC – Congenital Heart Defects <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/heartdefects/chd-facts.html#text=Newborn%20screening%20for%20critical%20CHDs%20involves%20a%20simple%20bedside%20test.placed%20on%20the%20baby's%20skin>