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## Things you Need to Know About Congenital Heart Defects



### Did you know that congenital heart defects are common?

► Congenital heart defects are conditions present at birth that affect how a baby's heart is made and the way it works. They are the most common type of birth defects.

In the United States, about 40,000 infants are born with a heart defect each year.



### Did you know that some heart defects can be diagnosed before birth, some at birth or some can be diagnosed after a baby leaves the hospital?

► Some congenital heart defects can be found before birth. Knowing if a baby has a heart defect before birth can help families plan for the future. Some heart defects can be found at birth, because they can cause a baby to have bluish tinted nails or lips or troubled breathing. Others might have no signs at birth and are not found until later in life, during childhood or even adulthood. If a health care provider (a doctor or nurse) thinks a congenital heart defect is present, the baby can have several tests to diagnose the defect.



### Did you know that congenital heart defects can greatly affect the finances not only of the families involved, but of everyone?

► In the United States, hospital costs for people with a heart defect were about \$1.4 billion in one year. Families and the government share the burden of these costs, which means that all taxpayers are affected. Other costs due to lost wages or work limitations can affect families and businesses as well.



### Did you know that people with congenital heart defects are living longer?

► As medical care and treatments have advanced, infants with a congenital heart defect

are living longer and healthier lives. Many now are living into adulthood. About one million adults in the United States are living with a congenital heart defect. It is important for children and adults living with a congenital heart defect to see a heart doctor regularly throughout their lives.



### Did you know that some congenital heart defects can be prevented?

► The cause of most congenital heart defects is unknown. Some babies have heart defects because of changes in their genes or

chromosomes. They also might be caused by a mix of genes and other risk factors. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Birth Defects Prevention Study has found that women who are obese, have diabetes, or smoke during pregnancy increase their chances of having a baby born with a heart defect. A woman can take some important steps before and during pregnancy to help prevent congenital heart defects. She can work to get to and stay at a healthy weight, control diagnosed diabetes, quit smoking, and take folic acid daily. These actions can reduce the risk of having a baby with a congenital heart defect.

For more information, visit <http://www.address/here>

National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities  
Division of Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities

