

Ventricular Septal Defect

Normal Heart

The normal heart has four spaces. The two top spaces receive blood from the body and lungs. These spaces are called the atria. The two bottom spaces pump blood to the body and lungs. These are called the ventricles. The spaces are separated by walls known as the atrial septum and ventricular septum.

Ventricular Septal Defect (VSD)

A ventricular septal defect is the most common congenital (present at birth) heart defect. This type of defect is a hole in the wall between the right and left ventricles. This hole allows blood to flow across from the left side, where the pressure is high, to the right side, where the pressure is lower.

These holes may vary in size. They may be present in many locations in the ventricular wall. People rarely have more than one. Small holes rarely causes problems and have a high chance of closing on their own.



Signs and Symptoms

A murmur caused by the blood flowing through the hole is often heard during a routine exam. You will see a cardiology provider for further testing. A healthy person should have no symptoms as a result of a small hole. A moderate or large hole may cause:

- Fatigue
- Sweating
- Rapid, heavy, or congested breathing
- Problems feeding
- Poor weight gain

Testing

Patients will need a complete exam. They will also need an ultrasound of the heart, called an echocardiogram, to confirm the defect. It also helps us find the location and size of the hole.

Treatment

Small holes have a good chance of closing without surgery in the first year or two of life. Moderate or large holes may close on their own. Sometimes patients need surgery to close them.

Patients should have regular check-ups with their normal provider. We may suggest that they return to our Cardiology clinic at times. This check-up may only be every year or two.

Who to Call

Pediatric Cardiology
(608) 263-6420

Adult Congenital Heart Disease
(608) 890-5700

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 3/2020. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing HF#6560