

## **Congenital heart diseases:**

Congenital heart disease is a general term for a range of birth defects that affect the normal way the heart works.

The term "congenital" means the condition is present from birth.

Some types of congenital heart disease may be mild.

## **Causes:**

In most cases, no obvious cause of congenital heart disease is identified. However, some things are known to increase the risk of the condition, including:

The mother having certain infections, such as rubella, during pregnancy.

The mother taking certain types of medicine during pregnancy, including statins and some acne medicines.

The mother smoking or drinking alcohol during pregnancy.

The mother having poorly controlled type 1 diabetes or type 2 diabetes.

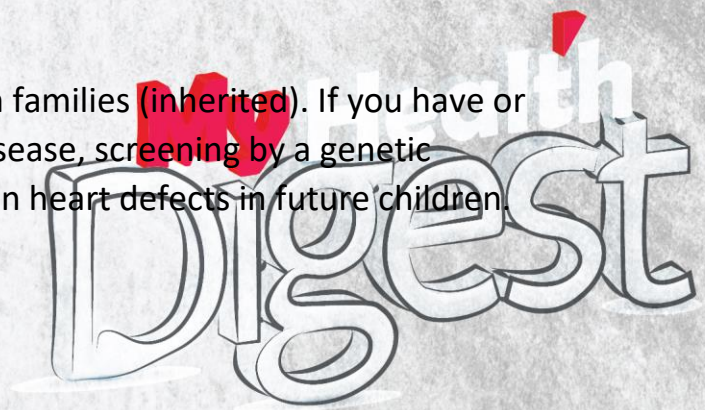
## **Symptoms:**

Common congenital heart disease symptoms in adults include:

- Irregular heart rhythms (arrhythmias)
- Blue skin, lips and fingernails (cyanosis)
- Shortness of breath
- Feeling tired very quickly with activity
- Swelling of body tissue or organs (edema)

## **Prevention:**

Some types of congenital heart disease occur in families (inherited). If you have or someone in your family has congenital heart disease, screening by a genetic counselor may help determine the risk of certain heart defects in future children.





**Treatment:**

Mild defects, such as holes in the heart, often don't need to be treated, as they may improve on their own and may not cause any further problems.

Surgery or interventional procedures are usually required if the defect is significant and causing problems. Modern surgical techniques can often restore most or all of the heart's normal function.

