

INFORMATION LEAFLET FOR FETAL CARDIAC SCAN

You have been referred to the Fetal Centre at Liverpool Women's Hospital to have a detailed ultrasound scan of your baby's heart. This may be because there is a minor problem with your baby's heart. Please do not worry, as this is not always a cause for concern. Another reason why your baby might need a scan may be because you have a history of heart disease in the immediate family or that you suffer from a condition that is more commonly associated with heart abnormalities.

It is important that you understand that during your scan we could find a major problem with your baby's heart, and sometimes we might detect findings that may be associated with other abnormalities even though the heart may be normal. We will have a chat to you about our findings after the scan and discuss what it means for your baby.

Some heart abnormalities are connected with chromosome abnormalities such as Down's syndrome, if we detect these abnormalities we will discuss the testing for Down's syndrome with you.

We can detect most (but unfortunately not all) forms of major and severe heart abnormalities. There are some conditions affecting the baby's heart that are impossible to detect in the womb so we cannot give you a 100% guarantee that there are no problems with your baby. If, after your baby is born, a heart murmur is detected, further tests of the heart will be ordered.

What we *can* detect:

When we scan your baby we are looking on the scan to see that the heart is put together normally. We can detect abnormalities where the heart chambers, valves or arteries are either formed or attached properly. We can detect large holes in the heart and most severe forms of blockages of the two main arteries (main blood vessels) coming from the heart. Even though

everything may appear normal at the time we do the scan, unfortunately blockages to the valves and arteries can develop as pregnancy advances, so it is impossible for us to give you a 100% guarantee that everything is normal

What we *cannot* detect:

1. There are two communications (holes) between the right and left side of the heart, which are present in all babies before and when they are born, these usually close by themselves after the baby is born. In some babies these may not close and the baby may be described as having a heart problem. Because these holes are open before your baby is born there is no way of detecting whether they will close at the time of the scan.
2. We cannot detect every type of hole in the heart, especially small ones.
3. We cannot detect milder forms of valve blockages or narrowing because they may not be present at the time of the scan.
4. We cannot detect heart muscle abnormality.

Please ask us to clarify anything you do not understand.