



What is a heart murmur?

A murmur is an extra sound the heart can make when blood flows through it. Some murmurs are harmless (called 'innocent' 'benign' or 'functional'). Some murmurs are not normal. Your child or teen will need some tests to see if the murmur is a problem or not.

What causes a heart murmur?

'Innocent' murmurs are extra noises made when blood flows through a normal heart. Abnormal murmurs can be caused by many things, for example:

1. A defective heart valve;
2. A 'hole' in the heart between heart chambers (ventricular/atrial septal defect)
3. Narrowing of one of the heart vessels.

Are heart murmurs common in children?

Yes. Heart murmurs are common in children. Most are harmless and go away as your child grows.

What will happen during our cardiac clinic visit?

During your clinic visit, we will:

- Take your child's health history;
- Examine your child or teen;
- Decide if further tests are needed.

If your child or teen has tests during this visit, your cardiologist will discuss the results with you before you leave.

Tests for heart murmurs



Electrocardiogram (ECG or EKG)

Every child with a suspected heart murmur will receive an ECG. This is a simple test that records the electrical signals in the heart. We'll place 15 stickers on your child's chest, arms and legs. We'll connect these stickers to a machine that records the signals, and shows them on a screen. We'll print out a copy of the recording for the cardiologist to assess. Children and teens must stay still during the recording. It takes at least 5 minutes, but can take longer for children who have a harder time staying still.



Echocardiogram (cardiac 'echo')

Some children might require a test called an echocardiogram. This is an ultrasound to check for problems in and around the heart. This test gives us a picture of the heart in action. It allows doctors to see all parts of the heart and how well it is working. Echocardiograms do not use radiation, and there is no risk involved in this test. It doesn't hurt, and takes about 45 minutes.

Children between three months and three years of age sometimes need sedation (sleep medication) to lie still for this test. Children who need sedation, must not eat prior to the test. We'll arrange the echocardiogram for another day, and let you know how to prepare.

Have you registered for MyChart?

MyChart is a **FREE** secure, online patient portal that connects patients to parts of their CHEO electronic health record, anywhere, at any time.

To apply for MyChart access, visit cheo.on.ca/mychart and fill out the MyChart Access Request Form. Once your application has been approved, we'll send you an email with an activation code and instructions on how to log in and get started.

