

Atrial Septal Defect in children

Information for parents and carers



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hospital

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This leaflet provides information for parents and carers about atrial septal defect in children and the management and treatment of this condition.

What is an Atrial Septal Defect?

An atrial septal defect (ASD) is a hole between the two small chambers of the heart. It allows blood from the left sided chamber to pass to the right sided chamber.

This results in the right side of the heart being overloaded with blood and also results in the lungs becoming congested because they receive an excessive amount of blood.

Such defects cause only mild symptoms in young children (such as breathlessness on exertion), but if an ASD is left untreated over a period of many years it can eventually lead to permanent damage to the heart and sometimes to the lungs as well.

This may prove fatal when the patient reaches later adult life, so it is important that an ASD is treated when the child is young and before the heart or lungs have been permanently damaged.

Image of a normal heart

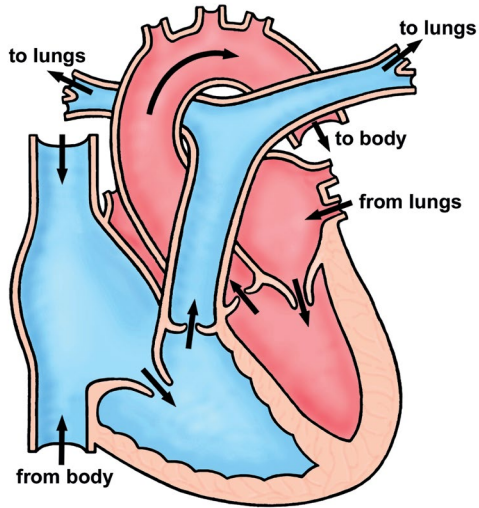
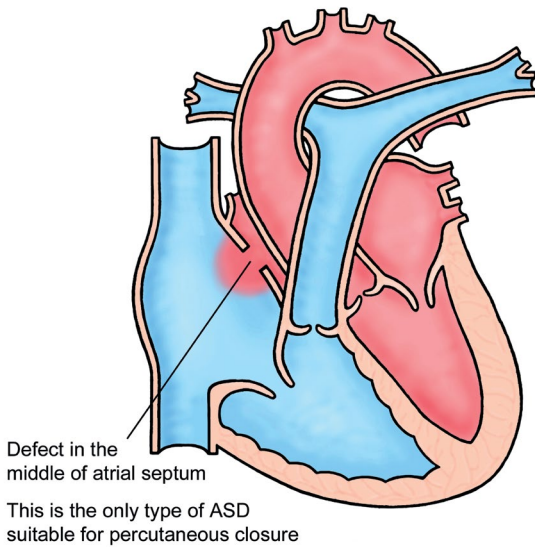


Image of a heart with Aortic Stenosis



Tests

An ultrasound scan of the heart (an “echocardiogram”) is required to make the diagnosis.

Treatment

There are 2 types of treatment, surgery, or keyhole, to close an ASD. This depends on the size and where the hole is situated.

Surgical treatment for ASD

If your child requires surgery, the surgeon will meet you in clinic and discuss the benefits, risks and potential complications with you in more detail.

Please watch the following video for more information about surgery.

ASD and Surgical Closure - YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=veJ6nnFv5pg>



“Keyhole” treatment for ASD

A keyhole device can be used to close an ASD without opening the chest. It is made of a mixture of very fine wire and synthetic cloth (Dacron). It is delivered to the heart folded up inside a long thin tube (catheter) which is inserted into the vein in the groin under general anaesthetic.

Once in the correct position, the device is unfolded by pushing it out of the catheter.

It is held inside the ASD by its “button” shape and once its position is satisfactory it is released and stays inside the heart, permanently blocking the hole. The device stays inside the heart and becomes covered over by the patients’ own tissue during the healing process. If your child requires keyhole treatment, the cardiologist will discuss this with you in more detail including the risks and potential complications.

Please watch the following video for more information about keyhole treatment.

ASD and Keyhole Treatment - YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJ9ek02ZvCw>



General advice for the future

Most patients will remain completely well and lead a completely normal life after treatment to close an ASD. No restrictions to physical activity are recommended and no special precautions are necessary.

Contact us

Please contact the Paediatric Cardiac Nurse Specialists on:

Telephone number: **0113 392 5467**
or email: **ccns.lgi@nhs.net**



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© The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust • 1st edition (Ver 1.0)
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Produced by: Medical Illustration Services MID code: 20241017_002/MH

LN005924
Publication date
11/2024
Review date
11/2027