

# Heart Murmurs in Children: What Parents Should Know

## What is a heart murmur?

A heart murmur is a noise that comes from the blood flowing through the heart. The doctor can hear it with a stethoscope. Most of the time, a murmur is just the sound of normal blood flow and it will go away over time. Once in a while, murmurs come from problems inside the chambers or valves of the heart.

## Is a heart murmur always bad?

No, most heart murmurs do not mean that anything is wrong. They are called “innocent” because there is no problem in the heart, and no tests or treatments are needed.

## How do you know if there is a problem?

Your doctor will ask you questions about medical problems in your family. They will also ask questions about your child’s energy for play and if your child has chest pain or breathing problems or turns blue. The doctor will examine your child’s body to look for signs of a problem.

## What are the next steps?

Most heart murmurs only need to be checked at doctor visits and go away on their own. Sometimes the doctor will ask you to see a children’s heart

doctor or get some tests to check the heart. Tests could be an x-ray, electrocardiogram (EKG), and pictures of the heart.

## Who should we tell about a murmur?

It is a good idea to tell other doctors about your child’s murmur until you are told it has gone away. If tests were done, get copies of the results that you can share with your child’s other doctors. This will help the doctors when they listen to your child’s heart for physical exams for school or for sports.

## Where can I get more information?

Your doctor

Children’s Heart Foundation

<https://www.childrensheartfoundation.org/about-chds/resources.html>

Children’s Hospital of Orange County

<https://www.choc.org/heart/heart-murmurs-in-children>

Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia

<https://www.chop.edu/conditions-diseases/heart-murmur>

Familydoctor.org

<https://familydoctor.org/condition/heart-murmurs>

Healthy Children from the American Academy of Pediatrics

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/heart/Pages/Heart-Murmur.aspx>

March 2022



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF  
FAMILY PHYSICIANS

This handout is provided to you by your family doctor and the American Academy of Family Physicians. Other health-related information is available from the AAFP online at <https://familydoctor.org>.

This information provides a general overview and may not apply to everyone. Talk to your family doctor to find out if this information applies to you and to get more information on this subject. Copyright © 2022 American Academy of Family Physicians. Individuals may photocopy this material for their own personal reference, and physicians may photocopy for use with their own patients. Written permission is required for all other uses, including electronic uses.