

Announcement

Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Week — February 7–14, 2016

Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Week, held February 7–14, is an annual observance to promote awareness and education about congenital heart defects (CHDs). Heart defects are costly and critical conditions that persons live with throughout their lives. CHDs affect nearly 1 in 100 births every year in the United States and are the most common type of birth defect (1,2). Some heart defects can be diagnosed prenatally using ultrasound, some might be identified during newborn screening using pulse oximetry, and others might be discovered by clinical exam or when the person becomes symptomatic. An estimated 2 million children and adults in the United States are living with a CHD today (3). CDC's Stories: Living with Heart Defects website includes personal stories written by persons affected by CHDs (<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/stories/heartdefects.html>).

CDC works to track and research CHDs through many different efforts, including 1) working with state tracking programs to evaluate newborn screening for critical congenital heart defects;* 2) funding state programs to track birth defects,† including CHDs; 3) funding several research centers§ across the nation to help understand the causes of birth defects, including CHDs; and 4) launching projects focused on tracking persons with CHDs across the lifespan.

* <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/heartdefects/cchd-facts.html>.

† <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/states/index.html>.

§ <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/cbdrp.html>.

CDC-funded research recently reported risks for certain CHDs in babies of mothers who were exposed to pesticides at work (4) and a reduction in CHD risk for mothers with better diet quality (5). CDC research also determined that children with CHDs receive special education more often than children who do not have birth defects (6). CDC's congenital heart defects website has additional information regarding congenital heart defects (<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/heartdefects>).

References

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