
Materials for OB-GYNs

Connect People with Heart Defects to the Care They Need

People who were born with heart defects need lifelong congenital cardiac care — but many of them aren't getting it. You can help change this!

As an obstetrician-gynecologist, you see patients at many life stages — and you may be the only physician some of your patients see. That means **you play an important role in connecting people with heart defects to the care they need to stay healthy.**

Take these steps to connect people with heart defects to a congenital cardiologist:

1. Ask patients if they have a history of heart problems — you might have patients with heart defects who've never mentioned they have one.
2. Ask patients with heart defects if they're seeing a congenital cardiologist — a specialist who treats people born with heart defects. If they're not, explain why lifelong congenital cardiac care is important.
3. Refer patients who aren't getting the care they need to a congenital cardiologist. If you need help finding congenital cardiologists in your area, check out the [ACHD Clinic Directory](#).

Be sure to tell patients who are pregnant or plan to get pregnant that seeing a congenital cardiologist isn't just important for their own health — it protects their baby, too.

To learn more, check out:

- [The AAP congenital heart defects toolkit](#)
- [Congenital heart defects resources from CDC](#)
- [The Congenital Heart Public Health Consortium](#)

With your help, we can make sure all people with congenital heart defects get the care they need to stay healthy!

How to Talk to People with Heart Defects About Congenital Cardiac Care

People with heart defects need lifelong congenital cardiac care. You can help make sure they get it!

As an obstetrician-gynecologist, you see patients at many life stages — and you may be the only physician some of your patients see. That’s why it’s important to emphasize why people with heart defects need to see a congenital cardiologist — and to refer patients who aren’t seeing one. When you do, you’ll help patients with heart defects stay healthy and safe.

Use these talking points to help start the conversation.

1. Find out if patients have heart defects

“Have you ever had any heart problems — even as a child? For example, did you ever have heart surgery or take medicine for your heart? If you did, I want to make sure you get the care you need to stay healthy.”

Some patients with a heart defect may not mention it — so it’s up to you to find out. When you learn that a patient has a heart defect, ask if they’re seeing a congenital cardiologist.

2. Explain why patients need congenital cardiac care

“Heart defects last for a lifetime. They can also get worse over time — but they may not cause symptoms right away. That’s why you need to see a congenital cardiologist regularly.”

When people with heart defects are feeling healthy, they may not realize they need to see a congenital cardiologist. Explain that congenital cardiologists can catch problems early to help make sure patients *stay* healthy.

3. Describe what a congenital cardiologist does

“A congenital cardiologist is a doctor who’s trained to treat heart problems like yours. They know how to tell if a heart problem is getting worse and how to help you stay healthy.”

Some patients with heart defects may not understand why they need to see another physician, so it’s important to explain what a congenital cardiologist does. Emphasize that congenital cardiologists know more about heart defects than anyone else — including which medicines or procedures patients may need.

4. Tell patients you can make a referral

“I can refer you to a congenital cardiologist to make sure you’re getting the care you need.”

Reassure patients that you can help them find a congenital cardiologist. Make sure you know how to find congenital cardiologists in your area so you can refer patients who aren't getting the care they need. If you need help, check out the ACHD Clinic Directory at: bit.ly/ACHDdirectory

Help patients with heart defects have a healthy pregnancy

Many women with heart defects have healthy pregnancies, but heart defects can increase the risk for pregnancy complications. When you see patients who are pregnant or plan to get pregnant, stress the importance of regular congenital cardiac care. You could say:

“Even if you’re feeling healthy now, your heart defect could affect your pregnancy. That’s why you need to see a congenital cardiologist regularly. They can help protect your health — and your baby’s.”

To learn more, check out:

- aap.org/CHDcare
- cdc.gov/heartdefects
- chphc.org

Social Media Graphic 1

Graphic Text

For born people with heart defects, seeing a congenital cardiologist is key to staying healthy. As an obstetrician-gynecologist, you can help.

Social Media Posts

Twitter

- As an OB-GYN, you play an important role in making sure patients with heart defects stay healthy. Talk to them about the importance of congenital cardiac care! [@AmerAcadPeds](#) has tips for starting the conversation: <https://bit.ly/3Qny7R2> #CHD #CHDCare4Life
- Do you have patients with heart defects who plan to get pregnant? Ask if they're seeing a congenital cardiologist — and refer them if they're not! Find congenital cardiologists in your area: bit.ly/ACHDdirectory [@AmerAcadPeds](#) #CHD #ACHD #CHDCare4Life

Facebook

- Do you have patients with heart defects? If you do, explain that getting regular congenital cardiac care can help them stay healthy — no matter their life stage. Find congenital cardiologists in your area so you can refer your patients: bit.ly/ACHDdirectory [@American Academy of Pediatrics](#) #CHD #ACHD #CHDCare4Life
- Congenital heart defects last a lifetime. Tell your patients with heart defects how important it is to see a congenital cardiologist! [@American Academy of Pediatrics](#) has tips for starting the conversation: <https://bit.ly/3Qny7R2>] #CHD #CHDCare4Life

LinkedIn

- Do you have patients with heart defects? [@American Academy of Pediatrics](#) is asking you to talk to them about the importance of seeing a congenital cardiologist — and refer patients who aren't getting care! Find congenital cardiologists in your area: bit.ly/ACHDdirectory #CHD #ACHD #CHDCare4Life
- Your patients with heart defects may never mention they have one — so it's up to you to find out! Then stress the importance of seeing a congenital cardiologist regularly. [@American Academy of Pediatrics](#) has tips for starting the conversation: <https://bit.ly/3Qny7R2> #CHD #CHDCare4Life

Social Media Graphic 2

Graphic Text

Congenital cardiologists can help people born with heart defects stay healthy. Connect patients with heart problems to the care they need.

Social Media Posts

Twitter

- Do you have patients with heart defects? Help them stay healthy by connecting them to congenital cardiac care. Find congenital cardiologists in your area: bit.ly/ACHDdirectory [@AmerAcadPeds](https://twitter.com/AmerAcadPeds) #CHD #ACHD #CHDCare4Life
- Help make sure patients with heart defects stay healthy. Talk to them about the importance of seeing a congenital cardiologist. [@AmerAcadPeds](https://twitter.com/AmerAcadPeds) has tips for starting the conversation: <https://bit.ly/3Qny7R2> #CHD #CHDCare4Life

Facebook

- People with heart defects need lifelong congenital cardiac care, but some don't get medical care at all until they get pregnant. [@American Academy of Pediatrics](https://twitter.com/AmericanAcademyofPediatrics) is asking you to refer pregnant patients with heart defects to a congenital cardiologist to help them stay healthy and protect their baby. Find congenital cardiologists near you: bit.ly/ACHDdirectory #CHD #ACHD #CHDCare4Life
- As an OB-GYN, you can play a key role in making sure patients with heart defects stay healthy. Talk to your patients with heart defects about the importance of lifelong congenital cardiac care. [@American Academy of Pediatrics](https://twitter.com/AmericanAcademyofPediatrics) has tips for starting the conversation: <https://bit.ly/3Qny7R2> #CHD #CHDCare4Life

LinkedIn

- Pregnant patients with heart defects need congenital cardiac care to help make sure they have a healthy pregnancy — but many of them aren't getting it. As an OB-GYN, you can help change that! Find congenital cardiologists in your area so you can make referrals: bit.ly/ACHDdirectory [@American Academy of Pediatrics](https://twitter.com/AmericanAcademyofPediatrics) #CHD #ACHD #CHDCare4Life
- As an OB-GYN, you play a key role in making sure people with heart defects stay healthy. Talk to your patients with heart defects about the importance of seeing a congenital cardiologist — and refer patients who aren't seeing one. [@American Academy of Pediatrics](https://twitter.com/AmericanAcademyofPediatrics) has tips for starting the conversation: <https://bit.ly/3Qny7R2> #CHD #CHDCare4Life