

Let's Talk About...

Innocent heart murmurs

The heart pumps blood to the lungs and the body. As the blood moves through the heart and across the heart valves, it sometimes creates a sound.

This sound is called a murmur.

Murmurs can be caused by heart valves that leak, valves that are too small or holes in the heart. More commonly, however, murmurs may occur as a result of normal blood flow through the heart. Murmurs that occur in normal hearts are called innocent murmurs.



How can your child's healthcare provider tell if a heart murmur is innocent?

Innocent heart murmurs often sound different to experienced healthcare providers than murmurs caused by heart defects. Your child's medical history may also help your child's healthcare provider determine if the murmur is likely to be innocent.

Sometimes a healthcare provider uses an electrocardiogram (ECG) to see if your child has a heart defect. An ECG uses little sensors, called electrodes, attached to your child's body. It checks for problems with your child's heart activity.

A healthcare provider may also use an ultrasound called an echocardiogram. This ultrasound can help the provider find possible causes of your child's murmur.

What should I expect if my child has an innocent heart murmur?

Innocent heart murmurs are very common during childhood. They may be easily heard one day and not heard the next day. Innocent murmurs often go away before your child is in high school, but your child may still have an innocent heart murmur by 18–19 years old.

Because innocent murmurs occur in children and teens with normal hearts, you should expect them to grow and develop normally. There is no need for treatment or any special precautions.

