



## Fetal Heart Program

As part of The Fetal Center at Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital, the Fetal Heart Program specializes in the early detection, monitoring and coordination of care for delivery for babies diagnosed in utero with a congenital (present at birth) heart defect. The Fetal Center's affiliated physicians deliver comprehensive care to both mother and baby, while working collaboratively with the pediatric cardiology and pediatric cardiovascular surgery specialists to develop a treatment plan

for the baby after birth. Through an academic partnership with McGovern Medical School at UTHealth, this multidisciplinary team has access to the latest technology and most advanced treatment options to provide exceptional care to patients with complex heart conditions.

The affiliated team is actively involved in research, education and community awareness in order to improve the detection rate of congenital heart defects before birth. Prenatal detection can be lifesaving in some cases, and early diagnosis and treatment are critical factors in improving outcomes for babies born with congenital heart defects.

### About Congenital Heart Defects

Each year in the United States, nearly 1 percent of babies are born with a congenital heart defect, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). About 25 percent of these babies have a critical congenital heart defect (CCHD), requiring surgery or intervention within their first year of life.

Although prenatal diagnosis of CCHD is possible by routine ultrasound, CCHD is not detected before birth in over 60 percent of babies with the condition, reports the CDC. A delayed diagnosis may put newborns at risk of serious, long-term illnesses and/or neurodevelopmental delay.

### Research and Education

At the Fetal Heart Program, the affiliated physicians work to advance the prenatal diagnosis and care for babies with congenital heart defects. Our goal is to raise awareness of the importance of prenatal diagnosis of CCHD, undertake focused research to increase our understanding of prenatal screening practices that lead to prenatal versus postnatal diagnoses of CCHD and provide outreach education to community providers to improve prenatal detection of CCHD.

The Fetal Heart Program specialists utilize state-of-the-art technology and advanced imaging techniques to improve diagnosis and treatment of fetal heart conditions. In addition to clinical care, the affiliated team provides education and onsite training in fetal heart screening to community area obstetrical and maternal fetal medicine clinics.

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### Prenatal Heart Screening

Prenatal heart screening should be part of an integrated, managed screening program that ensures health professionals are properly trained and ultrasound equipment is up-to-date (less than 5 years old is recommended).

The optimal time for detecting heart defects is during the routine anatomy scan at around 20 weeks' gestation. During the scan, a 5 Transverse View approach is recommended, which consists of a sweep of the heart that takes in five key views as it traces the connections and relationships of the heart structures. This protocol is designed to detect, but not diagnose, most forms of major structural heart disease in a practical and timely way.

In a normal fetal heart, five normal views should be seen. Sometimes, a view cannot be seen clearly due to limb artifact, fetal position or maternal factors; however, if a normal view is still not seen after a second attempt, it is important to consider a referral to maternal-fetal medicine specialists for evaluation.

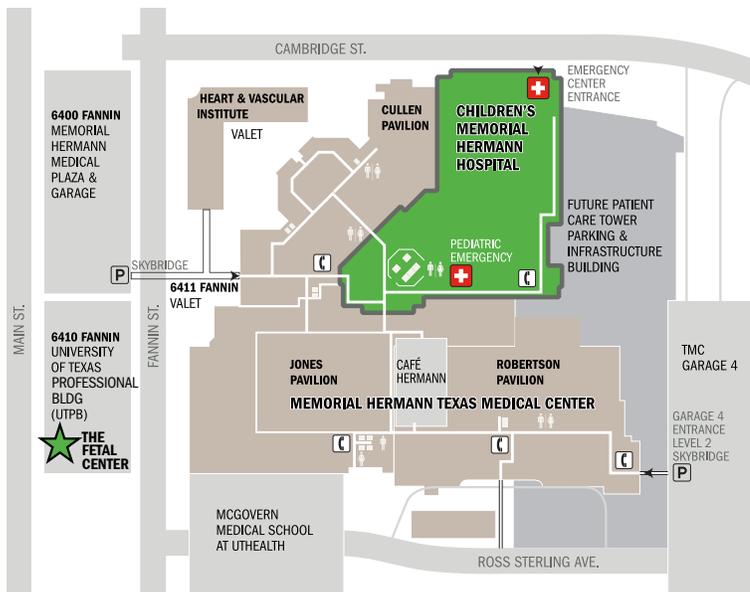
The Fetal Heart Program at The Fetal Center at Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital takes an integrated approach to better serve patients and their families. This means that the affiliated specialists – in the fields of fetal cardiology, pediatric cardiology and pediatric cardiovascular surgery – work together to provide a complete prenatal diagnosis and develop a comprehensive management, treatment and counseling plan for both mom and baby.

If you or your physician suspects a congenital heart defect, contact The Fetal Center at 832.325.7288.

### Referrals

To refer a patient, call 832.325.7288 or visit [childrens.memorialhermann.org/thefetalcenter](http://childrens.memorialhermann.org/thefetalcenter).

For more information and to view an educational video about congenital heart defects, visit [childrens.memorialhermann.org/fetal-cardiology](http://childrens.memorialhermann.org/fetal-cardiology).



### Location

#### The Fetal Center at Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital

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Located within the Texas Medical Center, The Fetal Center is affiliated with Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital, McGovern Medical School at UTHealth, and UT Physicians.

To view The Fetal Center's online resources, visit [childrens.memorialhermann.org/thefetalcenter](http://childrens.memorialhermann.org/thefetalcenter)

