



# Grandparents Corner

*February 2016*

*Heart Month*

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## **What is Congenital Heart Disease?**

Congenital means present at birth. Congenital Heart Disease (CHD) means a heart condition that a baby is born with. These conditions can affect the heart's structure, how it works, or both. There are about 35 types of known congenital heart defects. A number of these occur in combination. Little is known about the cause of most congenital heart defects. The amazing progress over the past 50 years in diagnosis, surgery, and other interventions has vastly improved survival.

## **How Common is Congenital Heart Disease?**

Congenital heart defects are the most common birth defect. Each year, about 1 out of every 100 babies born has a heart defect. More than half of all babies born with CHD will require surgery in order to survive; 21 percent of children requiring cardiac surgery are under one-month-old, and 40 percent of children requiring cardiac surgery are under one-year-old. Across Canada, there is an estimated 280,000 children and adults with CHD and the number is increasing every year.

## **How is Congenital Heart Disease Diagnosed?**

CHD can be discovered during pregnancy, after birth, or in adulthood. Early detection is of critical importance and can increase survival rates. During a pregnant woman's 20-week anatomy scan, doctors are sometimes able to detect a CHD. If you are pregnant, ask your doctor these important questions:

- Is the heart rate normal?
- Do you look at the arteries?
- Are the heart and stomach in the correct position?
- Is the heart function normal?
- Do you see four chambers?

Tests used to diagnose CHD after a baby has been born include:

- Pulse oximetry screening in newborns
- Cardiac catheterization
- Chest X-Ray
- Echocardiogram
- Electrocardiogram (ECG or EKG)
- Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)
- Cardiac CT

## **What are Some Symptoms of Congenital Heart Disease?**

- A heart murmur
- Fast breathing
- Shortness of breath
- Poor feeding, especially in infants
- Poor weight gain in infants
- Fatigue during exercise or activity

Source: [www.childrensheartnetwork.org](http://www.childrensheartnetwork.org)

## QUICK QUIZ

## Caregiver Assistance Newsletter - February 2016

Adequate nutrition is necessary for health, functionality, and the ability to remain independent. Healthy eating can increase mental acuity, resistance to illness and disease, energy levels, immune system strength, recuperation speed, and the ability to manage chronic health problems. When money is tight, there are ways to get adequate nutrition. Answer True or False to the questions below.

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1. *When grocery shopping, do your best to buy only the items on your list. T F*
2. *You may be eligible for meal delivery from Meals on Wheels if you are age 60 or over. T F*
3. *Meals such as stews, casseroles, or stir-fries “stretch” expensive items into more portions. T F*
4. *It is almost always cheaper to buy foods in bulk such as family packs of chicken, steak, or fish, and larger bags of potatoes and frozen vegetables. T F*
5. *Meals on Wheels provides much-needed food, along with interaction and socialization. T F*
6. *Save money in restaurants by getting the early bird special, going out for lunch instead of dinner, or looking for “2 for 1” deals. T F*
7. *It is okay to provide personal information or your credit card number over the phone to unsolicited callers who say they are from SNAP. T F*
8. *Elderly people are at special risk for foodborne illness because they can’t efficiently fight off the bacteria, virus, and parasites that make people sick. T F*
9. *Flu-like symptoms with a fever, headache and body aches may be the flu or it may be foodborne illness. T F*
10. *Doggie bags from restaurants should be refrigerated within two hours; within one hour if air temperature is 90°F or above. T F*

**KEY:** 1. T 2. T 3. T 4. T 5. T 6. T 7. F 8. T 9. T 10. T