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Medical Specialists

SPECIALTY <i>(type in contact name and phone number)</i>	DESCRIPTION	APPROPRIATE QUESTIONS
Cardiothoracic Surgeon or Cardiovascular Surgeon	<p>A physician specializing in surgical procedures involving the heart, and blood vessels. (Thoracic refers to the chest, vascular refers to blood vessels.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is my child a candidate for surgery? • What types of surgeries are options? • What are the pros and cons of each surgery? • Are there any non-surgical treatment options? • What are the short term and long term success rates for each surgery? • What complications may arise? • What precautions or limitations will my child have after surgery? (if any)
Pediatric Cardiologist	<p>A physician specially trained in the diagnosis and treatment of abnormalities of the heart and blood vessels in children and teens. These abnormalities are known as “congenital heart disease” or “congenital heart defects.” They may also have adult patients who were born with heart defects. The pediatric cardiologist may prescribe medications and write orders for tests such as echocardiograms (ultrasounds of the heart), EKG’s (a test of the heart’s electrical activity) and chest x-rays to monitor the heart defect.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What medications does my child need? • Should we avoid any over-the-counter medications? • What follow-up tests will my child need? • How often are follow-up visits necessary? • What activities can my child participate in? • What activities should be avoided? • Is my child more susceptible to illness? • What vaccines or shots can my child have to prevent illness? (i.e. Flu shots, RSV vaccines)

Pediatric Cardiologist (fetal diagnosis)	A Pediatric Cardiologists specializing in prenatal (prior to birth) diagnosis of congenital heart defects via fetal echocardiograms (ultrasounds of the baby's heart during pregnancy.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can the fetal echocardiogram show that a regular ultrasound cannot? • How accurate are fetal echocardiograms? • When is the best time to view the baby's heart during pregnancy? • Is it possible to get conflicting opinions regarding the fetal echocardiogram?
Interventional Cardiologist	A Pediatric Cardiologist who specializes in performing cardiac catheterizations to diagnose problems, or to treat certain congenital heart defects. A cardiac catheterization involves placing a thin tube (catheter) into a blood vessel in the groin or arm, and guiding it to the heart where a special dye is injected. Images can then be taken to diagnose or treat certain heart abnormalities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a catheterization? • What are the risks/benefits of a catheterization for my child's defect? • What can a catheterization tell us about my child's heart defect? • What can a catheterization do to help treat my child's heart defect? • What are the short term and long term success rates?
Electrophysiologist	A cardiologist with specialty training in conducting and analyzing tests to diagnose, monitor and treat heart rhythm problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is involved in electrophysiology testing? • What can you find out about heart rhythms during this testing? • What are the benefits/risks of this testing? • What if a problem is found?
Obstetrician	A physician specializing in the care and treatment of women during pregnancy, childbirth and the period immediately following.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can I best take care of my body to help the baby be as healthy as possible? • What can I expect in regard to delivering the baby? • Will I need a C-section? If so, what is involved with that?
Perinatologist (or Maternal-Fetal Medicine Specialist)	An OB/GYN with 2-3 years additional training in high-risk pregnancies. They monitor the fetus and infant during the perinatal period (from approximately halfway through pregnancy to the first to fourth week after birth).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is my pregnancy progressing? • Is the baby's health or condition changing during pregnancy? • What special circumstances are there for us to consider with this pregnancy?

Pediatrician	A physician specializing in the development of children and in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of children's diseases and illnesses. They handle immunizations, regular height and weight checks, monitoring of the child's developmental milestones, and care for the child when ill. The pediatrician should work closely with the cardiologist when an illness or medication can affect the child's heart condition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is my child developing normally? • What resources are there if I think my child is delayed? (ie Early Intervention, OT, etc.) • Is my child's height and weight developing as it should? • How do I keep my child with a heart condition as healthy as possible? • When should my child see a dentist? How can the medications affect his/her teeth and gums?
Neonatologist	A pediatrician specializing in the first 29 days of an infant's life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does my baby have any health concerns? • What can we do to help the baby continue to thrive?
Anesthesiologist	A physician specially trained in the administration of anesthesia for surgical, obstetrical and other procedures, as well as the management of pain problems. The anesthesiologist has the critical responsibility for the patient's welfare when he or she undergoes anesthesia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What type of anesthesia is necessary for my child's procedure or surgery? • What options are there? • What are the possible side effects? • What special considerations are there for children going under anesthesia? • What special considerations are there for children with heart defects going under anesthesia?
Radiologist	A physician who specializes in analyzing images taken by x-ray, or other imaging techniques in order to help diagnose illness or problems with body structures, including the heart.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does the chest x-ray tell you about my child's heart or lungs?
Pediatric Nurse Practitioner (PNP) and Physician's Assistants (PA)	PNP's are Masters prepared nurses who provide advanced nursing care. PA's are licensed to practice medicine under the supervision of a physician. Both work closely with physicians to manage care provided pre- and post catheterization or heart surgery. They may help in the O.R. and provide follow-up visits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What concerns are there about my child's health? • What can we do to help our child maintain his or her health? • What medications does my child need to be on, and what do they do? • What kind of follow-up care does my child need?

Registered Nurse (R.N.)	Responsible for supervising daily patient care, making sure physicians' orders are correctly carried out, and monitoring patients' vital signs. They administer medications, take care of incisions and dressings, and help parents learn to care for the child's health care needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What medications is my child taking? • What do the medications do? • What is the best way to give medications? • Are my child's vital signs within the normal range? • How can I best care for the incision? • How can I best feed my child?
Transplant Coordinator (TC)	Often a registered nurse, the TC helps families while they await a heart transplant with any pre-op testing and preparing for surgery. After the transplant, they can help patients with medications, coordinate follow-up visits, and help with community resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does my child get listed for a transplant? • How long is the typical wait for a heart transplant? • How will we be notified if a heart becomes available? • What lifestyle or medical issues should we be aware of after the transplant?
Cardiac Social Worker	Social workers are professionally trained to help children and families who are dealing with difficult situations. They offer counseling and assist with lodging, finances, insurance, and link children/families with resources near home.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we get financial help? • Is lodging available for us? • What resources are nearby (restaurants, grocery stores, hotels etc.) • Can we tour the hospital? • How can family and friends reach us? • Where do we park? What phones do we use? • Is there a computer for patients with internet access? • Who do we contact if we have a problem?
Child Life Specialist	Child life specialists help support children during stressful hospital experiences. This is done largely through play, art and other fun activities. Depending upon the child's age, puppets, dolls and books may be used to help children and their siblings become familiar with hospital equipment and procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can I prepare my child for surgery? • When should I tell him or her about the surgery? • How can I prepare siblings? • Do you have a sibling program? • Do you have a playroom for patients and siblings?

Registered Dietician	Healthcare specialist who is qualified to create diet plans and offer dietary counseling. They help with infant formulas and write recipes for high calorie or other special formulas. They help with special dietary restrictions relating to fat, protein, sodium, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What foods should my child have? • Which foods should be avoided? • How do I know if my baby is getting enough calories? • How can I create higher calorie formula? • What is the best diet for my child?
Occupational Therapist (O.T.)	Feeding problems in children with congenital heart defects may be related to poor endurance, decreased interest to feeding, poor suck, swallow and breathe coordination, and muscle weakness. The OT evaluates and treats feeding-related problems in infants and young children with complex cardiac issues. OT can help with fine motor, sensory, visual motor, and/or motor planning. Fine motor skills consist of movements of small muscles that act in an organized and subtle fashion, for instance, the hands, feet, and muscles of the head (as in the tongue, lips, facial muscles).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What areas does my child need help with? • What can we do to help the baby with feeding issues? (not able to swallow, regurgitation, etc.) • What other fine motor skills does my child need to work on? • How can I help my child with his or her fine motor skills and feeding problems? • What developmental toys can help my child with fine motor skills?
Physical Therapist (P.T.)	Health care professionals who prevent, identify, and correct movement problems. They assess, treat, and provide consultation to children who have problems relating to cardio-respiratory (affecting the heart and lungs), neurological (affecting the brain/spinal cord/nervous system), and musculoskeletal (affecting muscles and bones).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What areas does my child need help with? • What exercises can we do to help strengthen muscles? • What developmental toys can help my child with gross motor skills?
Respiratory Therapist (R.T.)	R.T.'s evaluate, treat and care for patients with breathing or other cardiopulmonary disorders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does my child have breathing or lung problems? • What can be done to help with these issues?

Lactation Consultant	A professional who is trained to help mothers who want to breastfeed their babies. Because children with heart conditions often have feeding problems and cannot always breastfeed, make sure the lactation consultant has expertise in dealing with babies with heart conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can I help my baby breastfeed? • What if my baby seems too tired to breastfeed? • How does my baby's heart condition affect his/her ability to breastfeed? • What other options are there (pumping, formula, etc.)
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References:

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www.emedicine.com

<http://www.med.umich.edu/mott/>

<http://www.bridgeporthospital.org/heartinstitute/cardiacteam.asp>

<http://www.aboutkidshealth.ca>