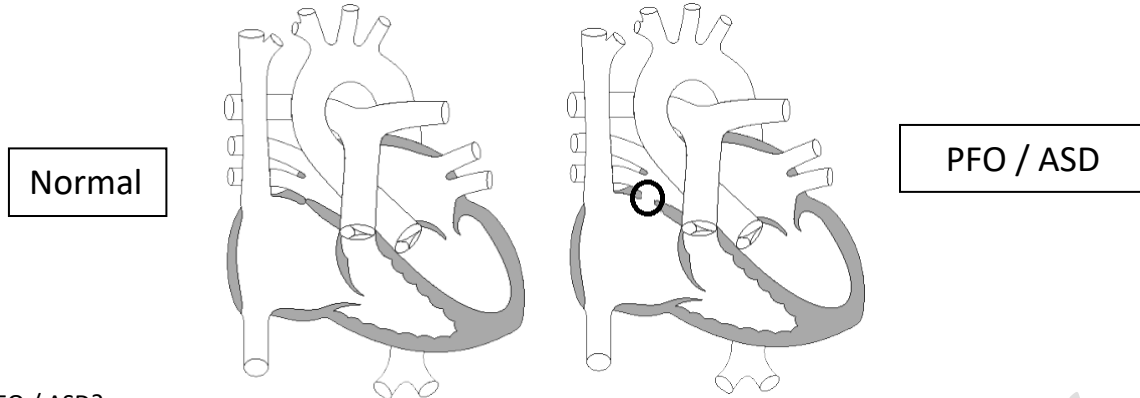


Patent Foramen Ovale / Atrial Septal Defect (PFO / ASD)



What is a PFO / ASD?

All infants are born with a small hole in the wall that separates the upper rooms of the heart (the atria) called a PFO. An ASD is a hole in the same wall but a different location. Most PFO/ASD will close on their own in the first 5 years. These are diagnosed after a murmur (extra sound from the heart) is heard and an Echocardiogram (ultrasound of the heart) is performed. Since murmurs can be heard in normal hearts it is more important that you know what was found on Echocardiogram, rather than there is a murmur.

What does the size of an PFO / ASD mean?

When the size is Moderate (medium) or Large it allows extra blood to circulate through the lungs and heart and makes these areas work slightly harder than normal. When it is trivial or small they generally do not cause issues and will likely resolve on their own in time.

What is the treatment of a PFO / ASD?

Most will go away on their own without any treatment. If the defect is moderate or large and causing poor weight gain, we may consider medications or extra calories to help your baby grow and give them more time for the hole to close. However, if the hole is large without any decrease in size over months to years or if there is poor weight gain despite medication we may consider a procedure or surgery. Fortunately, most can be closed by a procedure rather than surgery and decisions rarely need to be made before 2-3 years old.

What are signs I should be aware of for my baby?

Feeding is like exercise for a baby and when the heart and lungs are working harder the baby will have trouble feeding. If you see any of these signs you should contact your Cardiologist:

- Finishing a feed takes longer than before (not due to falling asleep during the feed)
- Fast and deep breathing during a feed
- Sweating during a feed
- Poor weight gain (keep in mind babies lose some weight during the first 1-2 weeks of life)

When should I follow-up?

Your Provider or Hospital should schedule your appointment and provide you with the information. You may also contact our office for information. If you call our office keep in mind newborns may be listed under the mother's name.

What if I have more questions?

You may call our office and ask for a sooner appointment or if you are in the hospital you may notify your Provider that you would like to speak with the Cardiologist.

For information on what to expect at your appointment or more information about our practice we invite you to check out our website

Johnson City Office
2312 Knob Creek Rd
Ste 208

Kingsport Office
935 Wilcox Crt
Ste 150
Kingsport, TN 37660

Abingdon Office
16000 Johnston Memorial Dr
Physicians Building #212A
Abingdon, VA 24211

Norton Office
1490 Park Ave
Ste 4B-2
Norton, VA 24273

Johnson City, TN 37604

Kingsport, TN 37660

Abingdon, VA 24211

Norton, VA 24273

Phone: (423)610-1099 Fax: (423)246-4300

www.pedscardiology.com