

## What are heart murmurs?

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Heart murmurs are noises made by blood as it goes through the heart or a blood vessel. They are similar to the noise made by water going through a hose. They are heard with a device called stethoscope.

Heart beats make noise. Nobody would worry if their doctor says that, when ausculting their chest, heart beats are heard. Some standard hearts, apart from the noise of the beats, also make murmurs. They are called mild or functional heart murmurs and they are frequent in childhood (most average boys have a murmur in any moment of their childhood). For instance, it is normal to hear a heart murmur in children with fever and it disappears when fever is gone. Many other mild heart murmurs have not got a clear reason, as it happens with fever. They can be heard for years although their intensity is not always the same and can even sometimes be heard or not. These heart murmurs usually disappear in adolescence and it is not important if they do not disappear.

Children with mild or functional heart murmurs do not require special care and they do not have to be controlled.

Heart murmurs are rarely due to a heart or blood vessel disease, which can be congenital or acquired. Congenital means that it is a feature with which the child was born. Congenital heart diseases are often anatomical defects and are called malformations. Congenital cardiopathies are not weird since they affect one out of 100 newborn babies. More severe malformations are diagnosed in the first days or weeks of life in children who have symptoms and do not always cause heart murmurs. Mild malformations, which are the most frequent, have no symptoms and can be noticed due to a heart murmur, which is sometimes heard from the first days or weeks of life, although it can sometimes remain unnoticed for months or years. Acquired heart diseases are very unusual in children.

In some situations, the doctor is sure that a heart murmur

is mild when simply visiting the patient. If they have doubts or think that it is due to a cardiopathy, they will ask a cardiologist. Nevertheless, most of cardiologist attention due to heart murmurs in non-symptomatic children turns out to be mild heart murmurs.

### Other interesting links:

<http://familydoctor.org/online/famdoces/home/common/heartdisease/kids/453.printerview.html>

<http://www.healthychildren.org/english/search/pages/results.aspx?Type=Keyword&Keyword=heart+murmur>