

# My Baby's Heart Condition

Narrator

Occasionally, babies who come to the NICU have a congenital heart problems or other conditions. Some heart issues are treated by medicine while others might require surgery. Your NICU doctors are there to help you understand the nature of these heart conditions.

Valencia Walker, MD

One of the most common things they'll have is something we call a PDA or patent ductus arteriosus. And with that there's a connection that is open before a baby is born between two of the major blood vessels, and that connection should close after birth. In premature babies that connection sometimes doesn't close and it leads to a lot of problems with their lungs and with their heart. And so we can do medicine sometimes and help it close or occasionally we'll need to do surgery so that we can close it so the babies can continue to grow and develop normally.

Mark Sklansky, MD

Surgery for PDA is very, very straightforward with a very, very low complication rate. Now what I like to tell parents is that surgery for a PDA does not involve opening the heart, does not involve going on a bypass. It's a very quick, straightforward procedure with very low risk.

Narrator

Beyond PDA, there are other heart issues that will need attention.

Sue Hall, MD, Neonatologist

The other category of heart problems is babies who are born with congenital heart defects, where there is something structurally wrong or incomplete with the heart, and those babies often go on to require surgery.

Parents

Our baby has congenital heart defects. So she's had heart surgery. It was very scary, and knowing that it was going to come out okay, it's still, it's hard.

Narrator

Finally, if it's discovered that your baby has a heart problem, they may need to be transferred to another hospital with higher level NICU for specialized care.

Mark Sklansky, MD

Many of the procedures of some babies with congenital heart disease required early on after delivery are only offered at certain hospitals around the country with neonatal intensive care units equipped with the proper personnel and equipment to provide those sorts of treatments.

Lashinique Parker, Mother

When I found out my baby had a heart condition I was just so terrified and she had to get transported to Loma Linda. And it was just the scariest feeling. I just felt helpless at the time because I couldn't do anything for her. But I'm so glad she came, and she overcame it, the one big obstacle.