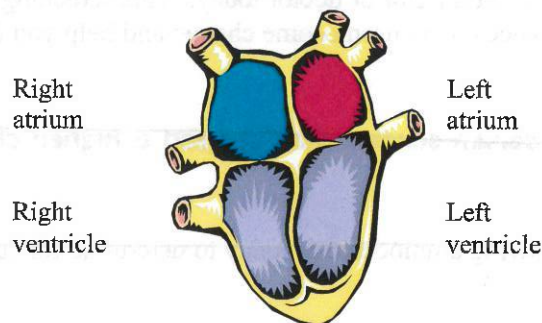


Echogenic Focus in the Left Ventricle of the Heart

What is an echogenic focus?

An echogenic focus is a “bright spot” in the heart that can be seen on an ultrasound. Most of the time an echogenic focus is seen in the left ventricle of the heart. This is NOT a heart defect, it does NOT change the function of the heart, and it does NOT cause heart disease. Usually the bright spot is a small calcium deposit and is a normal finding.

The heart is divided into four chambers as shown below.



Occasionally, an echogenic focus is seen in a different area of the heart, or more than one bright spot is seen. If this is the case for you, your physician or genetic counselor will talk to you more about this today.

How common is it?

An echogenic focus is a common finding on prenatal ultrasounds. The chance of finding an echogenic focus depends upon position of the baby, the age of the baby, and the picture quality of the ultrasound. At UNC, an echogenic focus is seen in approximately 20% (1 in 5) of all second or third trimester ultrasounds.

Why is it important?

If mothers have other risk factors, an echogenic focus may suggest that the baby has a higher chance of having a chromosome change such as Down syndrome. In cases like this, more testing will be offered to you.

What should I do now? (Provider, please check appropriate box)

Low Risk

- In most pregnancies, this finding does NOT increase the chances of a chromosome change enough to be a reason for more testing such as amniocentesis.
- Today, a very detailed ultrasound was performed to look for anything else that would make us concerned about a chromosome change in your baby.

Nothing else was found.

- If we were not able to clearly see all parts of your baby's body on the ultrasound, you may be asked to come back for another ultrasound later in your pregnancy.