

Innocent Murmurs – Normal Hearts

----- Parent Factsheet -----

RHC Emergency Department

Your child has been diagnosed today with an Innocent Murmur. This information sheet explains the nature of Innocent Murmurs.

What is an innocent murmur?

Everyone's heart makes sounds, which can be heard with a stethoscope. The word **murmur** is used by health carers to describe an extra whooshing sound in the heart in addition to those usually heard. It does *not* necessarily mean there is an abnormality in the heart. In fact, although it is true that children with heart problems will often have a murmur, most childhood murmurs occur in completely normal hearts. These murmurs are called Innocent, Normal or Flow Murmurs.

What causes an innocent murmur?

Although the exact cause of Innocent Murmurs is not known, it is thought to be turbulence in blood flowing through the heart. In the same way that deep narrow rivers flow quickly and create noise, children's small hearts tend to create extra noise. Similarly, large, wide rivers create very little noise, and in the same way large adults hearts are relatively quiet. *Most* children will have an Innocent Murmur at some stage during childhood. It will usually disappear by the teenage years, but can sometimes be heard into adult life.

When your child has been exercising or is unwell, especially with a fever, the heart pumps blood more quickly. As a result, the Innocent Murmur may be quite loud at these times. It is often during a fever that an Innocent Murmur is heard for the first time.

Are any tests required?

The doctor is able to recognise that your child's murmur is innocent by the quality of the sound; in the same way it is often possible to identify a particular make of car by the characteristic sound of its engine. For this reason tests on the heart are not necessary to diagnose an Innocent Murmur.

Is any further treatment/follow-up required?

As Innocent Murmurs are normal they do *not* need to be followed-up by a cardiologist. Your child does *not* need to follow any exercise or other restrictions. Similarly, they do *not* require any treatment.

An Innocent Murmur is an indication of a normal healthy heart!