

Birth Defect Series: Gastroschisis



What: Gastroschisis is a birth defect of the baby's abdomen. The intestines and other organs remain outside of the body during development and after birth.

Why: Gastroschisis can occur if your baby's abdominal muscles do not form correctly. During fetal development an abnormality can occur that allows the intestines and other organs to remain outside of the body. These organs may become damaged due to exposure to amniotic fluid because they are not covered by a protective sac. Research is ongoing to determine why gastroschisis occurs. Women who drink alcohol or smoke are more likely to have a baby with gastroschisis. Teenage mothers are also more likely to have a baby with gastroschisis. It is important for women of childbearing age to talk to their doctor about birth control if they do not plan to have a baby.

When: Gastroschisis is usually detected during pregnancy with the help of an ultrasound machine.

How: After birth, surgery is necessary to place the organs back into the abdomen. Depending on the severity, babies may need more than one surgery.

Resources for Illinois Families

Adverse Pregnancy Outcomes Reporting System

[http://www.dph.illinois.gov/
data-statistics/epidemiology/
apors](http://www.dph.illinois.gov/data-statistics/epidemiology/apors)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/
birthdefects/
gastroschisis.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/gastroschisis.html)

**And visit your
doctor for more
information.**

Image courtesy of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,
National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities.

