

Microcephaly

What is Microcephaly?

Microcephaly is a condition characterized by a baby's brain being smaller than typical. This can result in an infant having a much smaller head than other babies, and in many cases, can also lead to developmental delays.

How is Microcephaly Diagnosed?

Microcephaly is often detected through a prenatal ultrasound and may not be obvious until the third trimester.

What Causes Microcephaly?

A child can develop microcephaly in a mother's womb. Factors that cause a baby's brain to stop growing in utero include:

- » Genetic factors
- » Infection from the Zika virus
- » Severe maternal malnutrition
- » Chromosomal abnormalities
- » Maternal alcohol or drug use
- » Exposure to chemicals
- » Interruption of the blood supply to the baby's brain

Knowing the cause is helpful in predicting the type of complications a child will experience.

How is Microcephaly Treated?

There is no cure for microcephaly and babies with microcephaly have varied outcomes. For some, the medical challenges they face will be significant enough that they will pass away shortly after delivery.

Some babies that survive the newborn period will have significant cognitive impairment and other medical issues that will require advanced care throughout life.

Babies with less severe cases may have fewer noticeable symptoms. Approximately 15 percent of cases do not require any treatment apart from routine exams.

A Cardinal Glennon St. Louis Fetal Care Institute nurse is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to discuss referrals with physicians and potential families by calling 314-268-4037, option 2.

Phone	314-268-4037, option 2
Toll-free	1-877-SSM-FETL (776-3385)
Web	stlouisfetalcare.com
Email	fetalcare@ssmhealth.com
Facebook	facebook.com/fetaldocs

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If your child has complications, we will treat their specific needs, customizing a care plan to improve their overall well-being.

The goal of treatment for those born with microcephaly is managing the child's comfort and maximizing their capabilities at home and in their world.

Developmental therapies we may recommend are:

- » Physical therapy to help movement
- » Occupational therapy to increase confidence in performing day-to-day tasks
- » Speech therapy to help improve language, voice and swallowing skills
- » Psychological counseling to boost self-esteem and an understanding of their medical condition
- » Medication to control seizures, hyperactivity, or other problems

To learn more about how we can help, call the Cardinal Glennon St. Louis Fetal Care Institute at 877-776-3385.

While we can't change the diagnosis, we can provide you the care and compassion you seek, helping you and your child get the most out of life no matter what.
