



10 Tips for Managing Congenital Heart Disease

1. **Learn all you can about your heart defect.**
2. **Find a cardiologist with specific training in treating adults with congenital heart defects.** He/she is skilled in recognizing problems that might arise because of the defect or its repair including heart failure, extra heartbeats, or liver or kidney disease.
3. **Stay organized.** Keep detailed records of any procedures or surgeries you had done, as well as an updated list of medicine that you take now and have been prescribed in the past.
4. **Keep all follow-up appointments—even if you're feeling well.** Your heart team needs to monitor your heart over time and help keep other risk factors for (acquired) heart disease in check.
5. **Listen to your body, and report any changes.**
6. **Adopt a heart-healthy lifestyle:**
 - Eat a low-fat, heart-healthy diet.
 - Stick to an exercise plan that is safe for you.
 - Stay at a healthy body weight.
 - Take good care of your teeth by brushing twice a day, flossing and seeing a dentist twice a year.
7. **Take your medications as prescribed.**
8. **Stay socially connected.** Having a dependable support system and sharing interests can be energizing.
9. **The healthier you are overall, the better.** Keep up with annual physical exams, ask about getting vaccinated against influenza and pneumonia, and don't smoke.
10. **Be positive and keep an open mind.**

For more information about women and heart disease, visit CardioSmart.org/CHD.