

PRENATAL ULTRASOUND FINDINGS

Echogenic Intracardiac Focus (EIF)

What is an EIF?

An EIF is a small bright (white) spot seen in a baby's heart during an ultrasound.

The baby's heart is routinely examined during a second trimester ultrasound. Sometimes, one or more small bright spots are seen in the muscles of the heart.

There are many different terms that have been used to describe a bright spot in the heart; intracardiac echogenic focus, echogenic focus, cardiac echogenic focus, and echogenic intracardiac focus (EIF). If there is more than one bright spot, they are called echogenic foci.

This common ultrasound finding is seen in about 1 out of every 20 or 30 pregnancies (~3-5%).

What causes an EIF?

No one knows for sure why this is seen in some babies and not others. It is thought that the bright spot is due to an area of the heart muscle where there is a little more calcium than average. Calcium is a natural mineral found in the body. Areas in the body with more calcium, like bones and muscles, look brighter on the ultrasound screen.

Can an EIF cause problems for the baby?

An EIF is a harmless finding. It does not cause health problems for the baby and does not change how the baby's heart works.

Will the EIF go away?

Most EIF seen in the middle of the pregnancy will not go away before delivery. There is no special concern if they are still visible at a later time. No ultrasound follow-up is needed to watch for changes during pregnancy. There is also no need to follow-up after the baby is born.

Could an EIF mean the baby has Down syndrome?

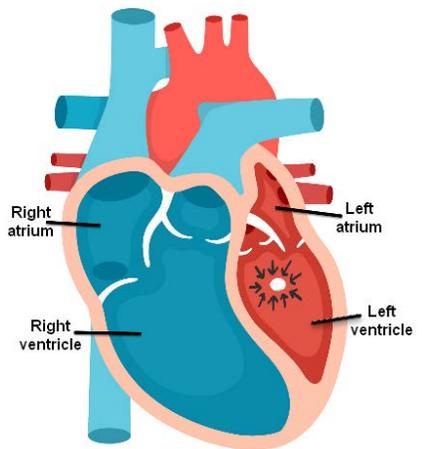
EIF is not very useful to screen for Down syndrome. Recent studies show there is no special risk with this finding, especially when the rest of the ultrasound looks normal. Blood tests or amniocentesis are a better way to check for Down syndrome during pregnancy.

Are additional tests needed?

No additional testing is recommended based on finding an EIF. However, prenatal tests are routinely offered during pregnancy. You may have already had a blood test that screens for Down syndrome. Either cell-free DNA (also called cfDNA or NIPT) or AFP4 (Quad) screening can estimate the chance for Down syndrome. If you have not had prenatal screening, you can talk with your OB provider about your options.

Where can I get more information?

You can speak with your OB provider if you have additional questions about this ultrasound finding.



Echogenic focus in the left ventricle