

Splenic Cyst

Patient Information Series – What you should know, what you should ask.

What is a splenic cyst in the fetus?

A splenic cyst is a fluid-filled structure in the fetal spleen. They are often small and almost always cause no problems in the fetus. Occasionally, they are large and can compress other nearby organs.

How is a splenic cyst detected?

A splenic cyst can be detected by prenatal ultrasound, usually in the third trimester on an ultrasound examination ordered to assess the growth of the baby. They are seen as small, round areas within the fetal spleen on ultrasound examination.

What causes splenic cysts?

We don't know why some fetuses have splenic cysts. There are several theories which suggest that there are changes in cells within the spleen that result in a small fluid collection, but the theories are difficult to prove since most babies born with splenic cysts do not need to have them surgically removed.

Should I have more tests done?

You will be offered additional testing to help determine the cause for the cyst, and to make sure that there are no other abnormal ultrasound findings in the baby.

Tests that may be offered include:

- **A detailed ultrasound examination:** This is to carefully look at your baby for any other ultrasound findings or abnormalities and to make sure that the cyst is located within the spleen. Ultrasound can identify many but not all abnormalities.
- **Additional ultrasound examinations:** These are done to monitor the growth of the baby and the size of the cysts. Some cysts actually disappear during pregnancy, while others may grow. If the cyst grows larger, ultrasound can be used to see if there is compression of any other nearby organs.

What are the things to watch for during the pregnancy?

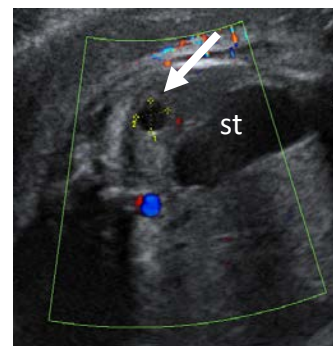
Additional ultrasound examinations will be done to monitor the size of the cyst.

How are splenic cysts managed after birth?

If the cyst remains small, your baby will likely be healthy at birth. The baby will most likely have an ultrasound after delivery to evaluate the size and location of the cyst, and to have follow-up with a pediatrician to make sure the cyst doesn't grow after delivery. Typically, these cysts do not need treatment unless the baby develops symptoms.

Will it happen again?

Splenic cysts are unlikely to be seen in the next pregnancy.



The arrow points to a small cyst in the fetal spleen. The spleen is located behind the stomach (st) in the fetal abdomen.

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What other questions should I ask?

- Are there any other abnormalities on the ultrasound?
- How often will I have ultrasound examinations done?
- Will my baby need surgery after delivery?
- Where should I deliver?
- Where will the baby receive the best care after it is born?
- Can I meet the team of doctors that will be assisting my baby when it is born, prior to delivery?

Last updated January 2020