

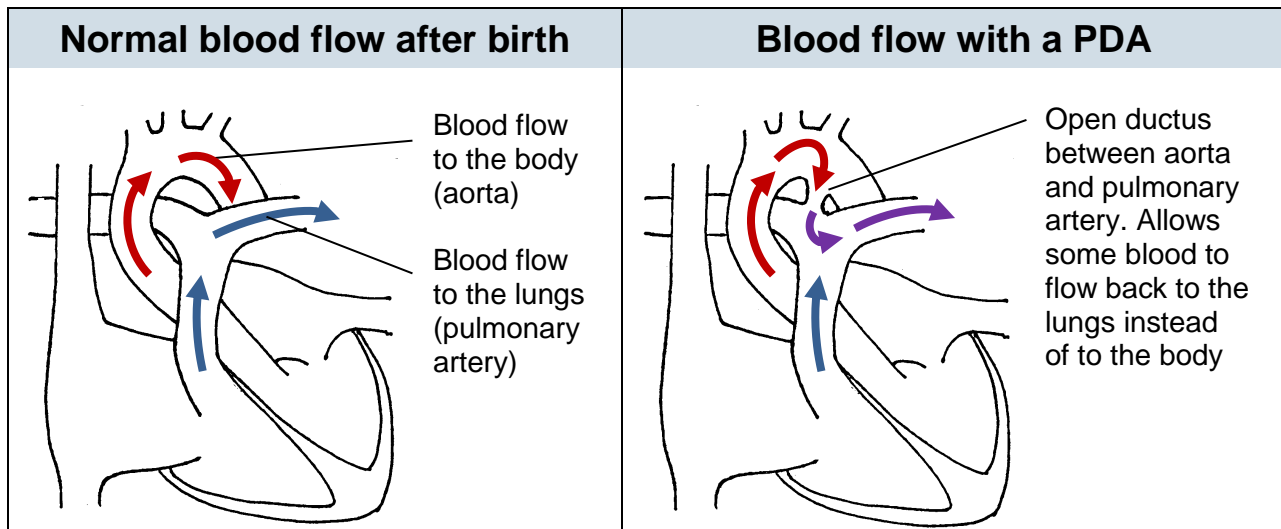
Patent Ductus Arteriosus or PDA

What is Patent Ductus Arteriosus?

Patent means "open" and the **ductus arteriosus** is a small connection between two large blood vessels near the heart. In an unborn baby, the ductus is open to allow blood to bypass the lungs, which are not yet being used for breathing.

After birth, the ductus should close, so that blood goes to the baby's lungs. For babies born near their due date, the ductus usually closes within 1 to 2 days. For babies born more than 3 weeks before their due date, closing of the ductus is often delayed.

A patent ductus arteriosus or PDA means that the ductus arteriosus remains open after birth. There is still a connection between the two large blood vessels near the heart that allows blood going to the body to flow back to the lungs. Depending on the size of the ductus, a small or large amount of blood may flow back to the lungs. This can put a strain on the heart and lungs by making them work harder.



How often does PDA happen?

The ductus remains open in:

- 1 out of every 5 babies born more than 3 weeks before their due date
- At least 3 out of every 5 babies who are born 12 weeks or more before their due date

A PDA is more common in premature babies who weigh less than 1,000 grams (2.2 pounds), and in babies who have breathing problems.

How do the doctors know my baby has a PDA?

Your baby may have these signs of a PDA:

- a heart murmur which is heard with a stethoscope
- pulses that feel full or "bounding"
- breathing is faster, deeper and more laboured
- you can see the heart beating under the skin

A chest x-ray and an ultrasound of the heart called an echocardiogram can help diagnose a PDA.

What is the treatment for a PDA?

In some babies with a PDA, the ductus closes on its own and no treatment is needed. A smaller premature baby may need treatment to close the PDA.

Treatment may include:

- Reducing the amount of intravenous fluids or feeds to decrease the work of the heart and lungs.
- A ventilator and/or oxygen to help decrease the work of breathing.
- Using a medication to close the ductus. This is usually successful in 70% of cases.
- If the medication is unsuccessful, an operation to close the ductus may be needed. The surgeon puts a clip on the ductus to close it.

**If you have any questions about your PDA or your baby,
please speak with a member of your care team.**