

connexions

linking the medical & personal worlds of fetal syndromatic issues

eli's story:
finding a miracle

babyproofing:
it's never too early to start

surviving sleep
[or a lack thereof]

better **bedside manner**

home away from home:
tips for keeping it together





expert care from the cincinnati fetal center

editorial submitted by the Cincinnati Fetal Center

When a fetal abnormality has been diagnosed, pregnancy can quickly turn from feelings of joy and excitement to fear and worry. At the Cincinnati Fetal Center, our team of experts is dedicated to exploring the unique challenges and opportunities facing each patient and unborn baby. As we do so, we often are able to provide innovative treatment options that offer real hope.

Our team is led by physicians from Cincinnati Children's, Good Samaritan Hospital and University of Cincinnati Medical Center, who specialize in treating complex and rare fetal conditions. As experts in maternal-fetal medicine, neonatology and fetal surgery, we share a passion for providing exceptional, comprehensive care. Our extensive experience, coupled with our clinical and basic science research to improve fetal care, enables us to provide the most sophisticated, effective therapies available.

Care for the Full Spectrum of Fetal Conditions

The Cincinnati Fetal Center is one of only a few comprehensive fetal care centers worldwide. We use advanced technologies and cutting-edge therapies to treat a variety of medically complex fetal conditions, including:

- Amniotic band syndrome
- Bladder outlet obstruction (BOO)
- Chorioangiomas/placental tumors
- Complex multiple gestations

- Congenital cardiac disorders*
- Congenital diaphragmatic hernia (CDH)
- Congenital pulmonary airway malformation/Congenital cystic adenomatoid malformation (CPAM/CCAM)
- Fetal teratomas and other tumors
- Myelomeningocele (MMC)/spina bifida
- Twin-reversed arterial perfusion (TRAP) sequence
- Twin-twin transfusion syndrome (TTTS)

* in conjunction with the Fetal Heart Program at Cincinnati Children's

We offer sophisticated diagnostic testing and comprehensive treatment options. Our center's distinctive three-hospital collaboration allows us to draw on extensive resources as we develop treatment plans tailored to each of our individual patients.

Prenatal Surgery a Success

Nineteen weeks pregnant with her third child, Camilla King had a routine ultrasound that uncovered a complication in her pregnancy. Camilla and her husband Joseph discovered their unborn son had myelomeningocele or MMC, a serious birth defect.

Also called spina bifida, MMC occurs when a portion of the spinal cord and surrounding nerves protrude through an opening in the spine. This exposes the baby's spinal cord to the amniotic fluid in the mother's womb and can be harmful to fetal development.

The Kings, from Nashville, Tennessee, were referred to the Cincinnati Fetal Center by

their maternal-fetal medicine specialist. They drove four hours for an evaluation and learned the risks and benefits of having the hole in their baby's back surgically repaired while Camilla was still pregnant, versus waiting until after the baby was born. "They did a great job of presenting all of the facts about our options, positive and negative," says Camilla.

Prenatal repair closes the hole in the baby's back while the baby is in utero, through open surgery or fetoscopic surgery, which is less invasive. Research has shown that babies who receive prenatal repair of myelomeningocele through open surgery can significantly benefit. The outcomes of fetoscopic surgery are currently being studied.

The Kings chose for Camilla to have the prenatal fetoscopic MMC repair. Camilla was 25 weeks pregnant, and the five-hour surgery was successful. Her care team included Charles

Stevenson, MD; Jose Peiro, MD, PhD; Mounira Habli, MD; Charles Vorhees, PhD; and Foong-Yen Lim, MD. Nine weeks later, Oliver was born vaginally and the surgical repair on his back was in excellent shape.

He is now 8 months old and making progress hitting his milestones. "He is such a happy baby," Camilla says.

"We are one of only a few centers in the world to offer fetoscopic MMC repair," says Dr. Lim, surgical director of the Cincinnati Fetal Center. "We were very pleased with the outcome of Camilla's surgery and are happy to see how well Oliver is doing today."

Our Team

The Cincinnati Fetal Center is a multidisciplinary program with a core team of faculty and staff who provide highly specialized, compassionate care, with our patient's needs always at the forefront. Our team is made up of:

Fetal

- Maternal-fetal medicine physicians
- Pediatric surgeons
- Neonatologists
- Clinical director
- Advanced practice nurses
- Nurse coordinators
- Labor and delivery nurses
- Research nurse + coordinator
- Social workers
- Genetic counselors
- Senior director of operations
- Program manager

Sub-specialties

- Anesthesiologists
- Fetal imaging radiologists
- Geneticists
- Cardiologists



8 month old Oliver, making progress and hitting milestones

- Nephrologists
- Neurologists
- Urologists
- Neurosurgeons

We partner with these specialty divisions to provide individualized counseling and care management planning for prenatal and postnatal care.

Comprehensive Evaluation, Diagnosis and Treatment

When you are referred to our center as a patient, one of our nurse coordinators will speak with you by phone to gather your background information. Using this information, along with any referral notes and test results, the team will determine which of our specialists are best suited to care for your needs. These physicians will work with others at the center to provide:

- Diagnostic testing
- Fetal assessment
- Prenatal counseling
- A management plan
- Fetal interventions/surgery
- Support services
- Postnatal care
- Long-term follow up

We provide care in an atmosphere of compassion, knowing that our patients and families are often dealing with difficult decisions and fears about the future. Collaboration is at the heart of our approach. Patients, family members and referring physicians are all part of our team, and we encourage referring physicians to contribute their own insights to the patient's care.

Innovative Treatment Options

Our physicians are passionate

about finding novel therapies to improve surgical outcomes and enhance quality of life for patients. Innovation is a hallmark of our approach to care. Our center is one of only a few in the United States to offer fetoscopic repair of spina bifida or MMC, fetoscopic tracheal occlusion for severe congenital diaphragmatic hernia (CDH) and laser surgery for twin and triplet pregnancies affected by twin-twin transfusion syndrome (TTTS) including TTTS patients who present with anterior placenta, hydrops and short cervix.

Our team also offers non-surgical therapeutic options. Among them:

- Intrauterine transfusion
- Steroid therapy
- Expectant management
- High-risk pregnancy management
- Genetic and prenatal counseling
- Management of short cervix

Careful prenatal planning allows us to anticipate potential complications that may occur following delivery and establish a strategy for managing those problems. We work closely with specialists at Cincinnati Children's, who have extensive experience in caring for critically ill newborns and providing long-term follow-up care to help them reach their full potential.

The goals of the Cincinnati Fetal Center are to educate our patients and work collaboratively to offer the best possible outcomes for complicated fetal diagnoses. We are proud to offer our patients expertise and care from such a strong group of caregivers and support staff who are fully committed to those goals.

the team...

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Surgical Director

Jose Peiro, MD, PhD, MBA
Endoscopic Fetal Surgery Director

William Polzin, MD
Maternal-Fetal Medicine Co-Director

Arthur Evans, MD
Maternal-Fetal Medicine Co-Director

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