



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FONTAN PATIENTS

♥ SPECIALIZED CARE FOR LIFE ♥

The Fontan procedure is not a cure, but with careful follow-up and a healthy lifestyle, children can grow stronger and reach their full potential.



1. LIFELONG CARDIOLOGY FOLLOW-UP

Regular visits with a pediatric cardiologist specializing in congenital heart disease.

- At least once a year (or more often if there are complications).
- Routine tests:



Echocardiogram



ECG and Holter Monitor



Cardiac MRI



Exercise Test

2. THROMBOSIS PREVENTION (ANTICOAGULATION)

The Fontan circulation has a higher risk of blood clots.

- Medications that may be used: Aspirin, Warfarin, or oral anticoagulants (DOACs).
- The choice depends on:
 - ✓ History of blood clots
 - ✓ Atrial arrhythmias
 - ✓ Ventricular function
 - ✓ Presence of a fenestration



Never stop these medications without consulting your cardiologist.

3. MONITOR FOR COMPLICATIONS

Early detection is key to better treatment.



Arrhythmias: palpitations, dizziness, fainting.



Ventricular dysfunction: tiredness, shortness of breath.



Protein-Losing Enteropathy (PLE): swelling, diarrhea, low albumin.



Plastic Bronchitis: persistent cough, coughing up casts or plugs.



Fontan-Associated Liver Disease (FALD): liver function tests and ultrasound at least once a year.

Report any new symptoms to your medical team.

10. PREGNANCY COUNSELING



- Pregnancy in Fontan patients is high risk.
- Preconception evaluation is essential.
- Managed by a team including a cardiologist and a high-risk obstetrician.

4. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



- Moderate regular exercise is recommended.
- Avoid high-contact or high-risk sports if there is dysfunction.
- Exercise improves physical fitness and venous return.

5. HYDRATION IS CRUCIAL



- Fontan circulation depends on adequate fluid volume.
- Avoid dehydration. Drink fluids regularly, especially in hot weather, during fever, exercise, or illness.

6. RESPIRATORY HEALTH



- Treat respiratory infections early.
- Recommended vaccines: influenza (annual) and pneumococcal.

7. HEALTHY NUTRITION



- Eat a balanced diet, low in sodium if there is swelling.
- Maintain a healthy weight and get enough protein.

8. MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING



- Screen for anxiety, depression, and learning difficulties.
- Provide emotional support and family involvement.

9. TRANSITION TO ADULT CARE



- Gradual transition to adult care.
- Education about medications, self-care, and healthy lifestyle.



SEEK URGENT MEDICAL CARE IF YOU HAVE:



Bluish color of lips, nails, or skin



Palpitations or irregular heartbeat



Swelling of legs, severe or abdominal fluid



Dizziness or loss of consciousness



Persistent diarrhea



Difficulty breathing



Every child is unique. With love, specialized care, and family support, they can achieve great things. ♥

We are here to support you every step of the way.



Advanced Pediatric Cardiology

Dr. Shabib Alhadheri, MD

SPECIALIZED CARE FOR LITTLE HEARTS, BIG DREAMS.



Compassionate and personalized care



Expertise in pediatric congenital heart diseases



Advanced technology with a human touch



Partnership with families

Recommendations for Fontan Patients



Lifelong Specialized Care is Essential.

Advanced Pediatric Cardiology

Dr. Shabib Alhadheri, MD

Lifelong Cardiology Follow-Up



- Congenital Cardiologist
- Annual Visits
- Echo, ECG, MRI, Exercise Testing

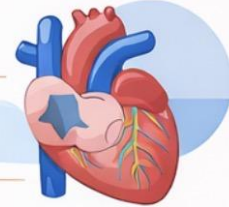
Monitor Complications



Arrhythmias



Ventricular Dysfunction



Protein-Losing Enteropathy (PLE)



Fontan-Associated Liver Disease

Anticoagulation



Aspirin / Warfarin / DOACs

Thrombosis Prevention

Physical Activity



- Moderate Exercise
- Avoid High-Risk Sports

Hydration



- Stay Well Hydrated
- Avoid Dehydration



Transition to Adult Care



- Planned Transition
- Education & Counseling

Respiratory Health



- Flu & Pneumococcal Vaccines



Mental Health

- Anxiety & Depression Screening
- Learning Support



Pregnancy Counseling

- High-Risk Pregnancy
- ACHD & OB Team



Nutrition



- Balanced Diet
- Low Sodium, High Protein



When to Seek Urgent Care

- Cyanosis
- Palpitations
- Severe Edema
- Syncope, Ascites, Diarrhea

Advanced Pediatric Cardiology

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Fontan is not a cure—It's lifelong physiology requiring proactive surveillance.



ADVANCED
PEDIATRIC CARDIOLOGY
Compassion. Expertise. Lifelong Care.

LIVING WITH FONTAN CIRCULATION

A Practical Guide for Families, Teens, and Young Adults

Fontan circulation is a long-term pathway for single-ventricle heart disease. It is not a cure, but it helps the body function when one ventricle does the work of two. With good follow-up and healthy habits, most people live active, meaningful lives well into adulthood.



Compassionate care
for today.
Stronger hearts
for tomorrow.

LIFELONG CARE MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE.

Regular follow-up and
healthy choices help
protect your heart and
whole body.

CORE FOLLOW-UP & MONITORING



HEART HEALTH

Regular cardiology visits
with ECG and echocardiogram.
Periodic cardiac MRI.
Monitor for arrhythmias.



LIVER HEALTH

Ultrasound or elastography
every 1–2 years.
Blood tests to monitor
liver health and scarring.



BLOOD & CLOTTING RISK

Screening for clotting issues.
Some patients need
medications to prevent
blood clots.



KIDNEY FUNCTION

Annual monitoring of
kidney labs, urinalysis,
and blood pressure.



EXERCISE CAPACITY

Exercise testing helps
guide safe activity.
Regular physical activity
is encouraged.



NEURODEVELOPMENT & EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Screening for learning
differences, attention
concerns, anxiety,
depression, and quality
of life.



PRIMARY CARE COORDINATION

Strong collaboration
between your cardiologist
and primary care provider
is essential.



MULTIDISCIPLINARY CARE

Cardiology, hepatology,
nephrology, nutrition,
mental health, and
social work support.

RED FLAGS

CALL YOUR CARE TEAM IF YOU NOTICE:



New or worsening fatigue



Reduced exercise tolerance



Fast, irregular, or pounding heartbeat



Fainting or dizziness



Blue lips or fingertips



Swelling of legs, belly,
or around the eyes



Belly pain, diarrhea, poor appetite,
or poor growth



Jaundice or signs of
liver dysfunction



Persistent cough, breathing
difficulty, or chest discomfort

LIVING WELL WITH FONTAN CIRCULATION



Stay active
within your safe
limits.



Stay well
hydrated.



Eat a balanced
diet and maintain
a healthy weight.



Avoid smoking,
vaping, and
alcohol.



Keep vaccines
up to date and
practice good
dental care.



Prioritize sleep,
stress management,
and follow-up
appointments.



With regular monitoring, early attention to
warning signs, and healthy habits, many
Fontan patients live full, active lives.

*You are not just
living longer—
you're living stronger.*



TRANSITION TO ADULT CARE

A planned transition to an adult congenital
heart team helps ensure lifelong,
coordinated care as you grow.



PREGNANCY & FAMILY PLANNING

Pregnancy can be high-risk for
Fontan patients. Pre-pregnancy
evaluation with your adult
congenital cardiologist is essential.



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ADVANCED PEDIATRIC CARDIOLOGY

LIVING WITH FONTAN

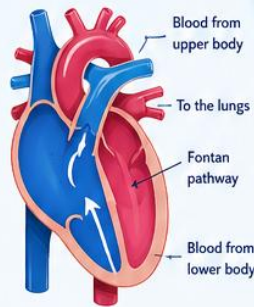
A QUICK GUIDE FOR PARENTS



WHAT IS FONTAN?

Your child's heart works differently. Blood flows directly from the body to the lungs without being pumped by a second chamber.

With proper care, most children with Fontan circulation live active, fulfilling lives!



KEEP YOUR CHILD HEALTHY

EXERCISE IS GOOD!



• Walking, swimming, biking are great



• Let your child set their own pace



• Builds strength and improves heart function



• Ask doctor before starting new sports

STAY WELL

✓ Keep all vaccines current (including flu shot)

✓ Wash hands frequently

✓ Good dental care (may need antibiotics before dental work)

✓ Drink plenty of water

✓ Take all medications as prescribed



WHEN TO CALL THE DOCTOR

Contact your cardiologist if you notice:



HEART & BREATHING

- Heart racing or irregular heartbeat
- Increased shortness of breath
- Fainting or severe dizziness



ENERGY & BODY CHANGES

- New or worsening fatigue
- Swelling in belly, legs, or face
- Poor appetite or weight loss



DIGESTIVE ISSUES

- Ongoing diarrhea
- Belly swelling or pain



OTHER CONCERNS

- More blue/purple color than usual
- Fever with feeling very unwell



CALL 911 FOR:

- Severe chest pain
- Severe trouble breathing
- Loss of consciousness



REGULAR CHECK-UPS MATTER

Your child needs cardiology visits every 6–12 months when doing well.

Tests may include:



Heart ultrasound



Heart rhythm monitoring



Exercise testing



Blood tests



Liver imaging



Don't skip appointments!

Early detection helps catch problems when they're easier to treat.



LIVING WELL WITH FONTAN

AT SCHOOL



- Most children can participate fully in activities
- Inform teachers and school nurse about your child's condition
- Modifications may be needed for some activities



EMOTIONAL HEALTH

- It's normal for your child to feel different or anxious
- Watch for signs of stress or sadness
- Ask for support from your care team or counselors



LOOKING AHEAD

- Many people with Fontan live well into adulthood
- They complete education, work, and build families
- Your medical team is here to support every step



IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- ✓ Keep your cardiologist's phone number handy
- ✓ Carry your child's cardiac diagnosis card
- ✓ Write down questions for appointments
- ✓ Never stop medications without talking to your doctor first
- ✓ Avoid contact sports if your child takes blood thinners

YOU'RE NOT ALONE



Your cardiology team is committed to helping your child achieve the best possible quality of life. Don't hesitate to reach out with questions or concerns.



This information is for educational purposes.
Always follow your cardiologist's specific recommendations for your child.

